

# Press Release

For Immediate Release  
May 19, 2025

Contact: Laurie Fox, Public Information Officer  
937-374-5669 office | 937-283-5178 cell | lfox@gcph.info

## Greene County Public Health Provides Tips on Food Safety for Picnics and Grilling

**XENIA, OH** – With Memorial Day looming, graduations underway, and the summer season officially kicking off, Greene County Public Health officials want to remind everyone about safe food handling during picnic and grilling season. It is important to prepare and transport food safely to prevent foodborne illnesses, such as Salmonella, Norovirus, *E. coli*, etc. With a little planning, summer parties and family gatherings can be both fun and safe for everyone. Please keep the following four points in mind:

**Cooking Temperatures:** It is very important to thoroughly cook raw animal foods to the proper temperatures to kill bacteria and prevent foodborne illnesses. Raw fish and whole muscle meats (such as steak, ribs, and roasts) must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees Fahrenheit. According to the Ohio Food Code, raw hamburger (ground meats) must be cooked to a minimum of 155 degrees, and raw poultry must be cooked to a minimum of 165 degrees Fahrenheit.

**Holding Temperatures:** Bacteria begin to multiply between 41°F and 135°F, so it is essential to keep hot foods HOT and cold foods COLD right up to the moment of cooking and/or serving. Cold food must be kept cold at 41 degrees Fahrenheit or below. Only place small portions of food out at a time and replenish as needed. Hot foods must be maintained at 135°F to prevent bacterial growth. Once any type of melon or tomato is sliced, it must be cooled down and held at 41°F, and never left at room temperature for more than four hours. Any food held out of temperature for more than 4 hours must be discarded to prevent a potential foodborne illness. It is important to use a clean and calibrated food thermometer to check the internal temperatures of the food you are cooking, holding, and serving.

**Clean:** According to the Partnership for Food Safety Education, 65% of consumers don't wash their hands before starting meal preparation. Don't be a statistic this season. Keep your hands clean by using soap and warm water, scrubbing them for at least 20 seconds. Rinse well and dry with a disposable towel. Use soapy water and a clean paper towel for tables and counters. Be sure to rinse and scrub fruits and vegetables under running water prior to cutting, slicing, or other preparation.

-cont'd-



## **Greene County Public Health**

*Melissa Howell MS, MBA, MPH, RN, REHS, Health Commissioner*

*Kevin L. Sharrett, MD, Medical Director*

**Separate:** Use separate cutting boards...one for each raw protein (fish, ground meat, poultry) and a different one for fresh, washed produce. Keep utensils separate to prevent germs that naturally occur on raw proteins from contaminating the fresh, washed produce. Make sure cooked meat does not come into contact with raw meat juices. Ensure that you place your cooked meats, which come off the grill, onto a clean plate, not the same plate that contained the raw meat.

To download a flyer about grilling your food safely, please visit: <https://www.fightbac.org/grill-master/>. For more information, please call Environmental Health Services at Greene County Public Health, 937-374-5600.

***Greene County Public Health...***  
***Your Accredited and Trusted Local Public Health Authority Since 1920***

###