Many people grill food year round, but it is especially popular when the weather is warm. Below are easy-to-follow recommendations and tips from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service for preventing foodborne illness while grilling.

**BE SURE TO:**

- Keep food refrigerated until ready to use.
- Avoid the "Danger Zone!" Bacteria can grow rapidly between 40 to 140 °F.
- Don’t allow perishables to stay unrefrigerated for more than 2 hours (1 hour if the temperature is above 90 °F).
- Store perishables, including leftovers, in the refrigerator or a cooler. Use ice or gel packs inside the cooler to keep food cold.
- Always follow the manufacturer’s guidelines when using a grill, whether it is charcoal or gas.
- Start with clean hands and a clean grill and utensils.
- Prepare your ingredients, like marinades, dry rubs, oils, and sauces, ahead of time.

**WASHING HANDS:**

- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with warm, soapy water. Many people don’t realize that they can make people sick if they fail to wash hands before handling food.

**CROSS-CONTAMINATION:**

- Cross-contamination can occur when a cutting board or plate that held raw food comes in contact with foods that are ready to eat.

**CHARCOAL OR GAS:**

- It is important that the grill is hot enough to safely cook your food. One way of gauging this is when you can’t keep your hand over it for 2 seconds.
- If charcoal is your choice, buy commercial charcoal briquettes or aromatic wood chips. Follow the manufacturer’s directions on the package label.
- A gas grill has hot and cold spots. Know your grill and read your manual.

**MEAT AND POULTRY:**

- Completely thaw meat or poultry before cooking.
- Trim excess fat from meat to prevent fire and grease flare-ups.
- Always marinate foods in the refrigerator using a glass or plastic food-safe container.
- Use a food thermometer to ensure that meat and poultry have reached a safe minimum internal temperature.
**USDA’S RECOMMENDED SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Temperature</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FISH</strong></td>
<td><strong>145 °F</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>PORK, BEEF, VEAL, LAMB – ROASTS, STEAKS &amp; CHOPS</td>
<td>145 °F, with a 3 minute rest time</td>
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<tr>
<td>PORK, BEEF, VEAL, LAMB – GROUND</td>
<td><strong>160 °F</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>TURKEY, CHICKEN &amp; DUCK – ROASTS, PIECES &amp; GROUNDS</td>
<td><strong>165 °F</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>HOTDOGS</strong></td>
<td>Reheat until steaming hot</td>
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</tbody>
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If you have food safety questions, you can contact “Ask Karen,” our 24/7 virtual representative, at AskKaren.gov, or call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline and speak with a live representative, in English or Spanish, at 1-888-674-6854. Also, visit www.foodsafety.gov for safety information on all types of foods.