

Tips for holding a top barbecue

Barbecues are fun. Food poisoning isn't.

We all want to serve up a sensational barbecue that also helps keep our family and friends safe. And it's great to look spontaneous, but it's safer and easier on the day if you prepare in advance. You can help avoid the build-up of food poisoning bugs by taking the following simple steps.

- **Pre-cook**, it is a very good idea to cook all chicken (including chicken on the bone) in the oven prior to giving it a final 'finish' on your barbecue. Your friends and family will still experience that special barbecue 'scorched' taste – and you will know that you've cooked the chicken all the way through. This technique can also be used for sausages, burgers and kebabs if you're cooking for large numbers, as you won't want to avoid providing undercooked food.



- **Charred doesn't mean cooked**, cook your barbecue food thoroughly until you are sure that your poultry, pork, burgers, sausages and kebabs are steaming hot, with no pink meat inside.

Turning it regularly and moving it around the barbecue will help to cook it evenly. Charred on the outside doesn't always mean cooked on the inside, so it's always safer to cut open and check your burgers, sausages and chicken. If in doubt – keep cooking.



- **Disposable BBQs take longer** to heat up and to cook food. Always check that your meat is cooked right through before serving.

- **Avoid cross contamination** by storing raw meat separately before cooking, use different utensils, plates and chopping boards for raw and cooked food. Always wash your hands thoroughly with soap and hot water and dry them before handling your food for the barbecue and after handling raw foods including meat, fish, eggs and vegetables.

(You should of course wash your hands after touching the bin, going to the toilet, blowing your nose, or touching pets.)



- **Don't wash raw chicken** or other meat, it just splashes germs. Cooking will kill any bacteria present, including campylobacter. On the other hand, washing chicken, or other meat, can spread dangerous barbecue bugs on to your hands, clothes, utensils and worktops by splashing.



- **Keep plates and cutlery away from raw meat and fish**, never serve your guests cooked food on a plate or surface that's had raw meat or fish on it, and don't use cutlery or marinades that have been in contact with raw meat. There's no point in serving up food with a flourish if you're adding bugs back into the mix.



Find out more

If you want your barbecue to be a sizzling success, find out more about the FSA's top tips at: food.gov.uk/lovebbq

For advice on barbecue safety and local by-laws for using barbecues in open spaces, contact your local authority.