

# BARBECUE SAFETY GUIDE



## BEFORE YOU START BARBECUING:

- Make sure your first-aid kit is to hand. It's a good idea to have a burns spray in it.
- Put a bucket of water or sand nearby just in case the barbecue gets out of control. It is always better to be on the safe side.
- Make sure your barbecue is set up properly and is stable and secure. Put it in a place where it's not at risk of being knocked over and isn't near a house, fence or anything else that might catch fire.
- Before you start barbecuing, set up a table nearby with all your plates, cooking utensils, seasonings and space to lay everything out so that you are organised. This means you don't have to keep running into the house to get things you've forgotten.
- Never use white or methylated spirits, petrol or aerosols to light your barbecue. They are really dangerous near a naked flame, and have caused countless accidents and uncontrollable fires in the UK. And also, if there are young children around, make sure they don't go near the barbecue or touch any part of it.



## BARBECUE FOOD HYGIENE

**Frozen meat:** It's OK to buy frozen meat and chicken for your barbecue as long as you thoroughly defrost it before cooking. If you don't, you'll struggle to cook it through properly. It will be more likely to burn on the outside before it cooks on the inside, and will put you at a higher risk of food poisoning, which is never a good thing!

**Handling raw meat:** It is really important to use separate utensils for raw and cooked meat. If you don't, bacteria from the raw meat can easily cross to the cooked meat (see *Food safety: avoiding cross-contamination*). Make sure you also have plenty of boards and plates on hand so you never have raw and cooked meats resting on the same surface.

**On the grill:** Don't overcrowd the grill: if food is too close together it takes longer to cook and increases the chances of cross-contamination. Clean the grill with a stiff wire barbecue brush or scrunched up ball of tin foil every time a batch of food comes off before adding the next lot; this keeps things hygienic and also helps to prevent food from sticking to the bars. This is especially important when cooking meat and veggies on the same grill, or barbecuing fruit for dessert.

**Cooking meat through:** Having food that is black and charred on the outside and raw in the middle is a common cause of food poisoning. This normally happens when the barbecue is too hot and the food burns before the heat can get all the way through the meat. If you've set up your coals well (*see Barbecue cooking guide for further information*), you should be able to control the temperature and cook the meat a little slower and more evenly.

When you take food off the barbecue, it should be piping hot right the way through. If in doubt, transfer one piece to a clean chopping board, cut it open and have a look. If you're cooking chicken or pork, there shouldn't be any pink meat left in the middle, and any juices should run clear.

**Other food:** Bacteria can multiply really quickly on warm summer days. Leave all of your dips, dressings, accompaniments and salads in the fridge until you're ready to serve, and keep bread and rolls covered and away from the barbecue; that way they'll be protected from bugs and birds and you won't risk them coming into contact with any raw meat.

*For more safety tips, check out:*

<http://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/barbecue.aspx>

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Summerhealth/Pages/Barbecuefoodsafety.aspx>