

Keeping Food Safe During Buffets

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CONSUMER FACT SHEET

Buffets or picnics can be a great way to serve lots of different, delicious foods to large gatherings of people for special occasions, such as holidays or graduations. But they can also be a means to transmit disease among your guests if care is not taken in how the food is handled. Common causes of food-borne illnesses include norovirus, *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7. Here are some tips to help you have a SAFE party.

Handle Food Safely

- Always wash your hands before and after handling food.
- Keep the kitchen, dishes and utensils clean.
- Always serve food on clean plates.

Cook Thoroughly

Fresh and frozen raw meat, poultry and fish should be cooked hot enough to kill the bacteria, parasites and viruses that may be in the product.

The temperatures shown below are recommended for home preparation of food. Always use a meat thermometer to check temperatures.

Food	Safe Internal Temperature
Whole poultry	180°F
Chicken breasts	170°F
Ground turkey and poultry	165°F
Ground beef hamburgers	160°F
All cuts of pork	160°F
Beef, veal, lamb steaks, roasts and chops	160°F *
All other meat and fish	160°F

Regulated facilities may cook to different temperatures because staff are trained in the use of time and temperature to reach safe standards.

* Medium done.

Keep Hot Foods HOT, Cold Foods COLD

- Divide cooked foods into shallow containers to store in the refrigerator or freezer until serving. This encourages rapid, even cooling. Reheat hot foods to 165°F.
- Hot foods should be held at 140°F or warmer. On the buffet table, keep hot foods hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers and warming trays.
- Cold foods should be held at 40°F or colder. Keep foods cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice. Otherwise, use small serving trays and replace them with cold foods from the refrigerator when more food is needed.

Observe the Two-Hour Rule

- Foods should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours.
- Replace empty platters rather than adding fresh food to a dish that already had food in it.