



## A Season of Change

July is - officially picnic season!

Who does not love the thought of combining summer weather and outdoor enjoyment together into a picnic? Memories from childhood are linked with family or group gatherings, having a picnic near the lake, a park, at a club site, or at a family homestead. Adults rush around getting games set up for family fun and food ready for mealtime while children scamper around underfoot with all the excitement of the day. This is something that we all look forward to throughout the year, especially in the wintertime when we have more time to dream about the carefree summer days ahead. The anticipation is a big part of the joy of the event.

With all the planning for fun, sometimes details about safety can get lost in the shuffle. Adults should plan for who is responsible for what. Someone needs to make sure children are being watched at all times, especially around water, traffic, equipment, and animals. Someone needs to take charge of keeping the foods safe temperature-wise and bug-free. Hot foods need to stay hot and cold foods need to stay cold. Food poisoning is not the way to end a good time picnic.

Simple rules to follow when planning meals wherever you are:

### Purchase & storage -

- Purchase fresh foods, not ones that have gone past the “sell-by” or “use by” date
- Refrigerate foods that are perishable soon after purchase, especially if the temperatures are high
- Keep your refrigerator set at 40° F or below and the freezer at 0° F or below.
- Cook or freeze chicken, fish, or ground meat within 2 days of purchase. Other meats like pork, beef, veal, and lamb can be refrigerated and stored for 3-5 days.
- Wrap meats carefully so juices do not leak onto other foods.
- Use freezer wraps for foods to help maintain the quality of the foods.

### Preparation –

- Every time you handle food (before & after) make sure your hands have been washed carefully – (20 second rule for handwashing with warm water, soap, and paper towel for drying).
- Keep a clean surface for prep. Clean and sanitize surfaces after preparing meats and fish. Cutting boards, counters, platters, and utensils need washing in soapy water after meat prep and before placing other foods on surfaces. Then, sanitize surfaces with a mixture of 1 tablespoon of unscented liquid chlorine bleach and 1 gallon of water.
- Marinate foods in a covered dish in the refrigerator. Do not reuse marinade for other foods after using for meat because of the germs within raw meat.

### Thawing –

- Refrigeration allows for slow and safe thawing
- Cold water provides faster thawing, but thawing should be done in a leak-proof container, changing the cold water every 30 minutes. Cook food immediately after thawing.





### Cooking –

- Cook beef, veal, lamb steaks, roasts, and chops to an internal temperature of 145° F (use a meat thermometer to check internal temperature)
- Cook all pork to 160° F
- Cook ground beef, ground veal, and ground lamb to 160° F
- Cook chicken or turkey to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165° F

### Serving –

- Keep hot foods hot – these foods need to stay at 140° F or warmer (using chafing dishes, slow cookers, or warming trays)
- Keep cold foods cold – these foods need to stay at 40° F or colder (using trays of ice)
- Do not leave perishable foods out more than 2 hours at room temperature or 1 hour if the outdoor temperature is hot.

### Leftovers –

- Throwaway any food left sitting at room temperature for more than 2 hours or 1 hour if temperatures are hot: 80 - 90's +° F
- Refrigerate foods in shallow containers for rapid cooling and use within 4 days.

To learn more about the basics of safe food handling, go to:

[http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/infectious\\_diseases/foodnet/pdf/basics\\_for\\_safe\\_food\\_handling.pdf](http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/infectious_diseases/foodnet/pdf/basics_for_safe_food_handling.pdf)



### August 1st – 7<sup>th</sup>: National Breastfeeding Awareness Week



With so much interest and concern over maintaining health, what better way to begin life than to have the most perfect food?! Nature has provided babies with all the nutrients they need to begin their lives – mother's breastmilk. If there is any way a new mother can breastfeed her infant, this natural practice is the best. Breastfeeding provides a lifetime of protection for infants and moms for several different kinds of ailments and diseases. To learn more, contact the Maternal/Child Nurses, Angela and Edie, at Yates County Public Health at 315-536-5160.

### August - National Immunization Month

August is the natural time to think about immunizations – before heading back to school or into the season when some communicable diseases like flu are spreading. Vaccines are a safe and effective method of preventing diseases that have caused misery for humans and animals alike for centuries. The more people who participate in an immunization program, the less likely that diseases will be spread across the globe. Think of your own health, the health of those you love, and those in your community – herd immunity does work to minimize the spread of diseases! Watch for flu clinics offered in September and October in the Yates County Office Building.



As Yates County Public Health transitions into a new branding awareness campaign, new practices will follow. One of these changes will include the "Health Counts" newsletter. The newsletter will soon be published "quarterly" using a somewhat different format. We will still bring you timely information about health topics that can help you manage and maintain your health and safety, however. Please watch for this "new and improved" "Health Counts" newsletter coming to you this Fall. Thank you for reading these monthly editions and stay tuned for what is yet to come.



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
**Yates County, NY**