

## Doctor's Bag



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### Does Grilling Meat Pose a Cancer Risk?

Some studies suggest there may be a cancer risk related to eating food cooked using high-heat techniques like grilling, frying, and broiling. Based on present research findings, eating moderate amounts of grilled meats cooked — without charring — to a safe temperature does not pose a problem.

If you are concerned about the risks associated with eating grilled food, here are some ideas from DukeHealth.org:

“If you love the grilled flavor, throw more fruits and vegetables like peaches, zucchini and bell peppers on the grill, since those are your safest choices.

Shorten grill time by using a thermometer, microwaving your food first and choosing thinner, leaner cuts of meat. Or make kabobs which require less cooking.

Flip food frequently.

Line your grill with foil poked with holes to allow the fat to drip down. That, and avoiding smoke flare-ups which also contain cancer-causing substances, will lessen your exposure.

Trim fat from meats before cooking.

Marinating meats first has been shown to reduce the formation of cancer-causing substances.

Use the lowest temperature to cook your food thoroughly. Keep your grill rack as high as possible to keep food far from the heat.

Finally, avoid processed meats such as hot dogs and sausages because grilled or not, they've been shown to increase cancer risk.”

## HLInfo YOUR MONTHLY GUIDE TO HEALTH CARE AWARENESS

### Summer Food Safety Tips

#### SHOPPING

- At the grocery store, pick out cold food like meat and poultry just before you check out.
- Separate raw meat and poultry from other food in the shopping cart and grocery bags.
- Drive home directly from the store. Always refrigerate food within one hour when the temperature is above 90°F.

#### DEFROSTING

- Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing or thaw sealed packages in cold water. You can use the microwave to defrost if the food will be placed immediately on the grill.

#### MARINATING

- Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- Poultry and cut-up meat can be marinated up to two days. Roasts, chops and steaks may be marinated up to five days.
- If part of the marinade is to be used as a sauce, reserve a portion and set aside before putting the raw meat into the rest of the marinade. If the marinade is to be reused, boil it before using it again.

#### KEEPING IT COLD

- When transporting food to another location, keep it cold to minimize bacteria growth. Use an insulated cooler with sufficient ice or ice packs to keep the food at 40°F or below. Pack food from refrigerator to cooler just before you are ready to leave home.
- Keep coolers out of the direct sun. Avoid opening the lid too often.
- Pack beverages in one cooler and perishables in a separate cooler.

#### KEEPING IT HOT

- Set cooked meats to the side of the grill rack so they don't overcook. At home, cooked meat can be kept hot in the oven set at 300°F, in a chafing dish or slow cooker or on a warming tray.

#### SERVING

- Don't put cooked food on the same platter that held raw meat or poultry.
- In 90°F or hotter weather, do not allow food to sit out for more than one hour.



### DidUKnow?

The United States Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service makes the following recommendations for safe grilling:

- Cook food thoroughly – to a safe minimum internal temperature to destroy harmful bacteria.
- Use a food thermometer to be sure the food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature before you eat it.
- NEVER partially cook meat or poultry and finish cooking later.

#### SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES

Whole poultry: 165°F

Poultry breasts: 165°F

Ground poultry: 165°F

Hamburgers, beef: 160°F

Beef, veal, lamb steaks, roasts and chops:

Medium rare: 145°F

Medium 160°F

All cuts of pork: 160°F

#### Information Sources:

DukeHealth.org, “Turn Down Grill Heat on Cancer Risk” by Duke Medicine News and Communications, published May 18, 2009 [http://www.dukehealth.org/health\\_library/news/duke\\_medicine\\_news\\_health\\_tip\\_turn\\_down\\_grill\\_heat\\_on\\_cancer\\_risk](http://www.dukehealth.org/health_library/news/duke_medicine_news_health_tip_turn_down_grill_heat_on_cancer_risk)

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) “Safe Food Handling, Barbecue and Food Safety” fact sheet [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/barbecue\\_food\\_safety/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/factsheets/barbecue_food_safety/index.asp)