



Safe & Healthy Summer Eating

Public Health Ontario estimates that over 100,000 cases of foodborne illness occur in Ontario each year. That risk increases in the summer due to the warmer conditions.

Following food safety rules and tips will help to ensure you, your family and your friends can enjoy your summer cooking.

Young children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with weakened immune systems are at greatest risk of suffering from serious cases of food poisoning. Symptoms include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, stomach cramps and stomach pain.

Deb Quintal, CPDMH Dietitian offers some tips for healthy and safe summer eating. "Keep your choices as healthy as possible by grilling fish or tofu as an alternative to red meat. Add veggies to skewers to make colourful kabobs or try husked corn on the cob and fresh ripe peach slices directly on the grill! If meat is your favourite, use lean cuts and trim off visible fat before grilling."

Whatever you choose to BBQ, avoid charring your food by reducing the heat or raise the height of the grill if food is starting to burn. You may want to keep a spray bottle of water nearby.

Check out the Eatright Ontario website at www.eatrightontario.ca for healthy ideas to try at your next BBQ.

4 BASIC RULES OF FOOD SAFETY

- ⇒ **Clean** your hands, surfaces and equipment thoroughly with warm soapy water. Bacteria can get onto hands, cutting boards, knives, dishcloths, countertops and the food itself.
- ⇒ **Separate** raw meat, poultry and fish from ready-to-eat foods, such as vegetables and fruits, during both storage and preparation. Never defrost food on the counter before cooking.
- ⇒ **Cook** your food thoroughly, especially meat and poultry. Use a food thermometer.
- ⇒ **Chill** your foods and leftovers to 4°C or lower within two hours of purchase or preparation, especially for high-risk foods like meat, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy products. When using a cooler, place packaged raw meats and poultry at the bottom to prevent spillage.