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NO GRILLING REGRETS: HEALTHY AND FLAVORFUL GRILLING IDEAS AND TECHNIQUES FROM THE HOME FOOD SAFETY PROGRAM

CHICAGO – Just in time for grilling season, the Home Food Safety program – a collaboration between the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and ConAgra Foods – offers healthful grilling advice.

“Grilling with family and friends is a great opportunity to make the most of the summer months, and the latest grilling trend is keeping it *healthy* – grilling nutritious and flavorful foods with cooking techniques to reduce your risk of food poisoning,” says registered dietitian nutritionist and Academy Spokesperson Sarah Krieger.

Food safety at the grill

“Warm weather brings out not only the grills, but also bacteria – which multiply in food faster in warm weather and can cause food poisoning,” Krieger says, offering advice to reduce your risk of food poisoning:

- Wash hands thoroughly before, during and after food preparation. Pack moist towelettes or hand sanitizer for those moments when soap and water are not readily available.
- Scrub your grill with hot, soapy water prior to each use. Removing charred food debris from the grill reduces exposure to bacteria.
- Keep raw meats, poultry, seafood and eggs separate from ready-to-eat foods; ditto for the utensils used to handle each. Pack extra color-coded plates and utensils to help prevent cross-contamination. Use different spoons and forks to taste, stir and serve.
- “Marinades can transform the flavor of food, and also tenderize the meat for a more enjoyable meal,” Krieger says. Always marinate foods in the refrigerator, never at room temperature on the counter. Cross-contamination can occur when a marinade is used with raw meat, poultry or fish, then “reused” on cooked foods. So, use a separate brush and utensils for cooked foods and set aside some fresh sauce to use on cooked food.
- Using a food thermometer is the only safe way to determine the doneness of cooked foods.
- To prevent the growth of harmful bacteria, don’t leave food outside in hot weather (90°F or above) for more than one hour. Throw away all perishable foods that have gone unrefrigerated for more than an hour.

WATCH/EMBED: *How to Grill Safely Video* (<http://homefoodsafety.org/video/safe-grilling>)

Fill your grill with healthy options

“Instead of only sticking with traditional hot dogs, hamburgers and sausages – which can be high in fat – mix it up with low-fat options like fish, chicken and vegetables,” Krieger says. “Trust me, you won’t be missing out on flavor. Grilling is a great way to bring out sweet, caramelized flavor in vegetables, and marinades can really bring grilled foods to life.”

Krieger recommends filling half your grill with fruits and vegetables, such as Portobello mushroom burgers and colorful vegetable kabobs with bell peppers, onion pieces, zucchini slices, cherry tomatoes and small mushrooms, or grill pineapple, peaches or nectarines for a naturally sweet dessert.

“Besides adding color and flavor to your cookout, eating plenty of fruits and vegetables as part of an overall healthy diet is linked with a reduced risk of some chronic diseases, such as heart disease, diabetes and even some types of cancer,” Krieger says.

Healthful grilling

When proteins in meat, chicken and fish are cooked at searing high temperatures, carcinogenic compounds called heterocyclic amines (or HCAs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (or PAHs) can naturally form, especially

where meat is charred. While research on the health effects isn't conclusive, the quality of the meat is better if you avoid charring:

- Trim fat and remove skin from meat prior to cooking.
- Emerging research suggests marinating meat for at least 30 minutes can reduce the formation of HCAs.
- Cook foods at a low temperature, and to the outside of the flame rather than directly over it to help prevent flaming. Drain away high-fat marinades and have a spray bottle with water ready for flare-ups.
- Flip food frequently to prevent crusting, and scrape off charred areas before eating meat, poultry or fish.
- Use a food thermometer to determine when food is done, and to avoid overcooking and charring.

“Wow your guests with delicious and healthy foods, prepared safely, so you won't end up with any grilling regrets,” Krieger says.

To learn more about safe and flavorful grilling, including [marinating foods](#), [grilling with wood chips](#) and to download the [Safe Grilling Guide](#) and more, visit www.HomeFoodSafety.org and download the free [Is My Food Safe? app](#).

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All registered dietitians are nutritionists – but not all nutritionists are registered dietitians. The Academy's Board of Directors and Commission on Dietetic Registration have determined that those who hold the credential registered dietitian (RD) may optionally use “registered dietitian nutritionist” (RDN) instead. The two credentials have identical meanings.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and ConAgra Foods' Home Food Safety program is dedicated to raising consumer awareness about the seriousness of food poisoning and providing solutions for easily and safely handling food in their own kitchens. More information can be found at www.HomeFoodSafety.org.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the Academy at www.eatright.org.

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