



## WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

### For Immediate Release

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News media calls to Vic Reato: Media Services Manager at (815)727-5088.

### INCLUDE FOOD SAFETY IN PICNIC PLANNING

**JOLIET** – If a picnic figures prominently in your plans this summer, the Will County Health Department reminds you that food safety is a must when outdoor activities are in the offing.

Take extra precautions when preparing, cooking or storing food. Picnics are a great source of summer fun, but foodborne illness can result if simple safety guidelines are ignored.

Preparation: Always wash hands thoroughly before touching any food. Hand washing is especially important before, during and after handling raw fish, poultry, or meat. If running water isn't available, use hand wipes with alcohol, or alcohol-based hand sanitizers to help insure clean hands.

Avoid the potential for cross contamination by using clean utensils for each food item you prepare. Knives used in the preparation of meat, fish or poultry can easily transfer bacteria to other foods you're planning to prepare a little while later. Cutting boards can also harbor bacteria, and these surfaces should be cleaned frequently.

Be sure to wash fresh fruit and vegetables under cold running water before preparation. Fruit and vegetables should be wrapped and stored in separate containers to avoid potential contamination from raw meat, poultry or seafood.

Cooking: Fish, poultry and other meats should always be completely thawed before cooking begins. Thorough cooking is vital.

The center of cooked hamburger patties should never be pink, and all juices should run clear. As a rule, cook hamburger and ribs to 160 degrees. Ground poultry should be cooked to 165 degrees. Poultry parts should be cooked to 180 degrees. Marinade at the time of grilling. Never re-use marinades.

Storage: Many picnickers take great care to prepare and cook foods properly, only to ignore storage recommendations. Ignoring food storage guidelines can easily result in foodborne illness.

Allowing foods to sit for several hours at room temperature provides adequate time for the growth of disease-causing bacteria. Put food away as soon as possible after eating. Bring an extra cooler to the picnic and make sure it is full of ice. Put leftovers in the fresh cooler as quickly as you can after eating. Always keep leftover foods out of the sun.

Symptoms of food poisoning include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps. Symptoms associated with foodborne illness can appear anywhere from 30 minutes to two weeks after the eating of contaminated items. However, symptoms most often occur within 4-to-48 hours. Consult a physician immediately if you suspect food poisoning.

For more information about food safety issues, visit [www.homefoodsafety.org](http://www.homefoodsafety.org).



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