



ONEIDA COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR
ONEIDA COUNTY EXECUTIVE

DANIEL W. GILMORE, PH.D., MPH
DIRECTOR OF HEALTH



“PROMOTING & PROTECTING THE HEALTH OF ONEIDA COUNTY”

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News Release

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**Contact: Megan Graziano
315-798-5229**

Celebrate this Memorial Day Safely ***Food Safety Tips for Outdoor Cookouts***

Memorial Day weekend is the kick-off to summer and cook-outs. Warmer temperatures can cause germs to flourish, and food-borne illness can be serious and sometimes life-threatening. Practicing good handling, cooking and storage can help avoid food poisoning and illness.

Wash your hands if you are preparing/cooking the food. Wash your hands before you eat. It’s a simple task, but one that is extremely important in helping keep us all healthy. Make sure the utensils, dishes and cooking surfaces are also kept clean to avoid cross contamination. Do not prepare or serve food if you don’t feel well or have sores or cuts.

Keep your warm food warm and keep your cold food cold to control the growth of bacteria. Know the safe temperatures and how to properly store the food. In hot weather, cold food should be refrigerated after being out for up to two hours and only one hour if the air temperature is 90 degrees or warmer. Salads and meat generally should not be stored in the refrigerator for more than a few days before throwing it out. For more specific information, a cold food storage chart can be found at <https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/cold-food-storage-charts>.

Thawing meat, poultry or seafood should never be done on a counter, but instead, in the refrigerator, with cold water or in a microwave (if you plan to cook immediately following).

Make sure to cook all meats to their recommended temperatures. Poultry needs to be cooked to 165 degrees, whereas fish and whole cuts of beef need to be 145 degrees. For more specific information, visit <https://www.foodsafety.gov/food-safety-charts/safe-minimum-internal-temperatures>. Using a food thermometer is the best way to know if you’re cooking your food to a safe temperature.

Symptoms of food poisoning can include vomiting, diarrhea and stomach cramps. These illnesses are preventable if you take the necessary safety steps. To learn more about food safety, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/> and <https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/handling-food-safely-while-eating-outdoors>.

ADMINISTRATION

ONEIDA COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
800 PARK AVE. UTICA, NY 13501
TEL: (315) 798-6400 • FAX: (315) 266-6138

SPECIAL CHILDREN SERVICES

ONEIDA COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
800 PARK AVE. UTICA, NY 13501
TEL: (315) 798-5249 • FAX: (315) 731-3491

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

ONEIDA COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING
800 PARK AVE. UTICA, NY 13501
TEL: (315) 798-5064 • FAX: (315) 798-6486

CLINICAL SERVICES

ONEIDA COUNTY CLINIC BUILDING
406 ELIZABETH ST. UTICA, NY 13501
TEL: (315) 798-5747 • FAX: (315) 798-1057