



*the* FLAME®

## *Healthcare News and Tips*

**May 16, 2023**

We are less than two weeks away from Memorial Day, the unofficial start of the summer season.

Just this past weekend, I attended a Mothers' Day barbeque and enjoyed a variety of salads, meats, fruit and desserts. Though the outdoor temperature was in the low 70's, I took notice of my friend's efforts to keep the food safe and edible. This got me thinking about food safety in general at outdoor events and voila! this month's topic of *The Flame* was born!

As we enter the BBQ season, please be careful!



The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports that you are more likely to get food poisoning than you are to get the flu. And if you're out this summer at a BBQ, chances are even greater. One in six Americans may get food poisoning this year! And each year these illnesses result in an estimated 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths.

Bacteria eats every kind of food you can think of, even the much maligned brussel sprout. It grows at any temperature above freezing and stays alive until that temperature hits around 165 degrees. When it comes to germs like Salmonella, all it takes is 15-20 cells in undercooked food to cause food poisoning! Salmonella burger coming up!!



**Hope you  
have a great  
summer!!**

**Betty**  
Betty Long, RN,  
MHA  
President/CEO



## **Guardian Nurses wins Healthcare Heroes' Award for Innovation by NJBIZ**

NJBIZ, New Jersey's leading business journal and creator of the Healthcare Heroes Awards, announced on Friday, May 12th that Guardian Nurses won in the category of Innovation Hero---Organization and will receive their award at a breakfast on June 27th at the Palace in Somerset, NJ.

The annual Healthcare Heroes program was created to recognize excellence, promote innovation and honor the efforts of individuals and organizations making a significant impact on the quality of health care in New Jersey. No surprise that our Mobile Care Coordinator nurses, supporting greater than 90,000 lives in the state of New Jersey, were selected.

Follow some simple rules to prevent an unpleasant BBQ experience!

### **1. Wash your hands**

You've read it plenty of times but it's true for food handling, too. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food. If you're eating where there's no source of clean water, bring water, soap, and paper towels or have disposable wipes or hand sanitizer available.

### **2. Marinate food in the refrigerator**

Don't marinate on the counter--use the fridge. If you want to use marinade as a sauce on cooked food, save a separate portion in the fridge. Do NOT use marinade that contacted raw meat, poultry, or seafood on cooked food unless you bring the marinade first to a boil.

### **3. Keep raw food separate**

Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood in a separate cooler or securely wrapped at the bottom of a cooler so their juices won't contaminate already prepared foods or raw produce. Don't use a plate or utensils that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood for anything else unless you wash them first in hot, soapy water. Have a clean platter and utensils ready at grill-side for serving.

### **4. Cook food thoroughly**

Use a food thermometer to make sure food is cooked thoroughly to destroy harmful bacteria (like Salmonella). Most meats must reach an internal minimum temperature of 145°F to 165°F to be safe to eat. Partial precooking in the microwave or on the stove is a good way to reduce grilling time--just make sure the food goes immediately on the preheated grill to finish cooking.

### **5. Keep hot food hot; keep cold food cold**

- Cold foods can be placed directly on ice or in a shallow container set in a pan of ice. Drain off water as ice melts and replace ice frequently.
- Don't let hot or cold perishables sit out longer than 2 hours, or just 1 hour if the temperature is above 90°F.
- Keep cold perishable food in a cooler until serving time. Keep coolers out of direct sun. Avoid opening the lid alot.
- Transport food in the passenger compartment of the car where it's cooler---not in the trunk.

### **6. Keep these items on your BBQ list.**

- food thermometer
- ice or frozen gel packs for coolers

Winners were chosen by a panel of independent judges who chose companies and individuals across 12 categories.

**Well done, New Jersey Team!!!**

- jug of water, soap, and paper towels for washing hands
- foil or other wrap for wrapping leftovers
- enough plates and utensils to keep raw and cooked foods separate

For a simpler way to be safe, remember WSCR: Wash, Separate, Cook and Refrigerate. More information about food safety outdoors can be found on the [Food Safety website](#).

And just to be extra safe, [click here for a one-page flyer with information on grill safety](#).

Have a great summer and be safe out there!!

Lighting your way  
through the  
healthcare maze.®

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