



American Association of Poison Control Centers

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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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### **Poison Centers Encourage Safe Food Handling This Memorial Day Weekend**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The nation’s 57 poison control centers are urging Americans to stay safe this Memorial Day weekend by storing, handling and preparing food carefully, according to Dr. Robert Geller, medical director for the Georgia Poison Center.

“The Memorial Day holiday often means camping, picnics and backyard barbecues. But it also can mean calls to poison control centers because of food poisoning,” Dr. Geller said. “To help prevent food-borne illness, always handle and cook food safely.”

In 2009, poison control centers received more than 18,000 calls about food poisoning. To keep your family and friends safe from food poisoning, always follow these food safety tips:

- Thaw meat, poultry and seafood in the refrigerator or microwave oven. Do not thaw on the counter at room temperature.
- Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Don’t use sauce that was used to marinate raw meat or poultry on cooked food. Boil used marinade or reserve a portion of the unused marinade to use as a sauce.
- Use a meat thermometer to make sure meats and poultry are cooked properly.
- Always wash your hands with warm, soapy water before and after handling food.
- When taking cooked food off the grill, do not put it on the same plate that held raw food.
- Keep hot food hot and cold foods cold. Do not allow either to be out at room temperature longer than two hours. When in doubt, throw it out.

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“If you or someone you know does get sick and you think it might be food poisoning, your poison center experts can help,” Dr. Geller said. “Call your poison center at 1-800-222-1222.”

For questions about food safety or poison control centers, the media may call Loreeta Canton, communications manager, American Association of Poison Control Centers, at 703-894-1863.

**About the American Association of Poison Control Centers:**

The American Association of Poison Control Centers supports the nation’s 57 poison centers in their efforts to treat and prevent poisoning. Poison centers offer free, confidential medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

If you have questions about poisons, or you believe you’ve been exposed to something that could be bad for you, call your poison center at 1-800-222-1222.

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