



NORTH  
DAKOTA

# FNP News

*Family  
Nutrition  
Program*

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# Enjoy a Safe Summer Picnic

Picnics are a fun part of summer.  
Eating outside adds variety to mealtimes.

Although mosquitoes and flies can be annoying pests at picnics, the “bugs” you can’t see, like harmful bacteria, are a bigger problem. The number of people who get sick from something they ate increases during warm summer months.

## Why Can Picnic Foods be Hazardous?

Temperatures outside are usually warmer than temperatures inside, and bacteria grow quickly in warm, humid temperatures. Foods may be allowed to stand unattended on a picnic table for a long time, too.

With picnic foods, there are more chances for cross contamination to occur. For example, when raw meat is brought to the grill, a common mistake is to place the cooked meat back on the plate that held the raw meat.

Common picnic foods like watermelon and cantaloupe have been linked with foodborne illness, too. Wash melons thoroughly, use a clean knife and keep cutup fruit cold.

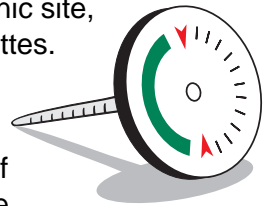
Salads often require more handling in the kitchen, so there’s a greater chance for cross contamination to happen. Don’t blame the mayo, though! Dirty hands or contaminated ingredients are usually the cause of problems. So, peel and wash all fresh produce carefully.

## Safer Picnics

If you are traveling to a distant picnic site and don’t have a way to keep foods cold, consider bringing foods that don’t need refrigeration like dried fruit or unpeeled fresh fruit like apples, bananas or oranges. Peanut butter sandwiches, cookies, crackers and unopened cans of food to heat at the site are all safe options.

## Follow these tips, too:

- Transport coolers in the vehicle’s passenger compartment, not in the trunk. Trunks can reach 150 degrees during the summer.
- If there are no handwashing facilities at the picnic site, bring moist towelettes.
- Bring a food thermometer to check doneness of meat. For example, burgers should reach 160 degrees and chicken breasts, 170 degrees.
- Don’t keep perishable food out of a cooler for more than one hour on hot days.
- Use disposable plates. Bring extra plates and utensils to help prevent cross contamination.
- Mosquitoes and flies can carry bacteria, too, so keep foods covered!





## Is bottled water healthier? Is it safe to re-use plastic water bottles?

Many people prefer the taste (or lack of taste) of bottled water. As long as your local water supply is safe, there's no health benefit to buying water. Buying bottled water can be expensive, too.

Many people like to re-use plastic water bottles, but some scientists are concerned with the level of harmful bacteria they have found in re-used bottles. The kind of cleaning needed to kill the bacteria could cause harmful chemicals from the plastic to get into the water. The best option is to use water bottles that were meant for multi-uses — and to clean them thoroughly every day with warm soapy water followed by thorough rinsing and air-drying.

## What are some healthy snacks for my kids to bring to school this fall?



Fruits and vegetables are always a great option since most children fall short of eating at least five servings daily. How about packing apples, oranges, bananas, raisins, small bunches of grapes, baby carrots or celery sticks? Whole-grain crackers or cereal-based snacks are healthy snack ideas, too.

Here's a tasty way to use "planned-over" grilled chicken . . .

## Grilled Chicken-Rotini Salad

- 4 oz. (about 1½ c.) dry rotini pasta
- ¾ c. broccoli flowerets
- ¾ c. sliced carrots
- 1½ c. cooked/grilled chicken (without skin)  
*For 1½ cups cooked chicken, cook about 1 lb. raw chicken.*
- 6 Tbsp. lite Italian dressing

Grill or cook chicken to an internal temperature of 170 degrees; cube, and chill quickly in a shallow pan in the refrigerator. Cook pasta according to package directions, drain and cool. Add vegetables and chicken. Toss gently with dressing and refrigerate until serving.

Makes about 5 servings.

Each serving contains  
217 calories,  
4 grams of fat and  
20 grams of carbohydrate.

