

## Food BBQ Safety

My BBQ Book – the Healthy Way #Keep Safe this Summer

Barbecuing can be a safe and healthy way of cooking food if specific precautions are taken. Our booklet contains a number of tasty, healthy and safe recipes with tips on safety measures which should be taken.

The summer months are full of relaxation and in particular outdoor and seaside entertainments. In order to avoid both short and long term illness, some key measures are essential. Transportation, preparation and handling of food should follow safe food handling guidelines. Food should be transported in a cool box and kept out of the sun. The barbecue should be set up with a clear space around it and a safe distance away from any flammable material. The barbecue should be set up in a corner but not against a wall so as not to burn nearby surfaces, and it should never be left unsupervised. Children and pets should be carefully supervised in the BBQ area.

When shopping for food, look for lean meat. Before cooking, remove visible fat to avoid dripping on coal or an open flame. Meat should be cooked thoroughly, without overcooking or burning. Any burnt meat should be removed before eating. A meat thermometer should be used to ensure that an appropriate internal temperature is reached.

Overcooking and burning of meats at high temperatures over an open flame can release chemicals harmful to health. When fat or juices from meat drips onto an open flame, they create flareups and smoke. This smoke will be full of chemicals (carcinogens) which are inhaled whilst cooking. These chemicals will adhere to the surface of meats and any nearby objects.

The grill is to be cleaned well before cooking. Meat should be frequently flipped while grilling. It is important to precook some meat such as poultry in order to avoid undercooking, overcooking or burning of meat.

A useful way to improve taste and to protect against the formation of harmful carcinogens is to marinate food before cooking over the BBQ. The marinade forms a protective coating around the meat and reduces the presence of carcinogens. Herbs and spices, garlic and onions make the food tastier and are full of antioxidants. Marinade should never be used on raw meat and poultry as it is full of germs.

For more information please contact the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Directorate on 2326 6000, by email on [health.pro@gov.mt](mailto:health.pro@gov.mt), via Facebook, Twitter or Instagram – HPDPMalta or on [www.healthpromotion.gov.mt](http://www.healthpromotion.gov.mt).