



# STRENGTHENING OKLAHOMA FAMILIES

## Family and Consumer Science News

### KAY COUNTY EXTENSION

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Kay County Extension Family and  
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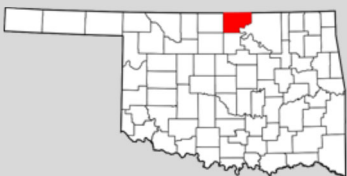
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## Food safety tips while grilling this summer

The first day of summer is June 20, and the warm weather calls for days spent poolside and evenings cooking on the grill. While the summer months are known for cookouts, picnics and other fun-filled activities, meal preparation and food safety should still be at the forefront of the backyard chef's mind, said Ravi Jadeja, food safety specialist for the Oklahoma State University Robert M. Kerr Food and Agricultural Products Center.

Foodborne illness peaks during the warmer season, as the hot, humid weather serves as a place for harmful bacteria to grow, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service.

"Food safety isn't just for food manufacturing plants; it is important for consumers to be mindful of food safety in the home as well as preparing meals away from the home," Jadeja said. "Using good food-handling practices and cooking foods to proper temperatures are just a couple of reminders to reduce the risk of foodborne illness."

The FAPC team offers the following food safety tips when utilizing the grill over the next few summer months.

#### Preparing foods for the grill

- To ensure meat and poultry cook evenly, completely thaw meats in the refrigerator before grilling.
- Never thaw meats on a countertop or in a sink – only utilize the refrigerator. Thawing at room temperature increases the risk of bacteria growth on the surface of the meat, even though the interior may still be chilled.
- Marinate meat in the refrigerator rather than the counter, where bacteria can multiply.
- Discard leftover marinade and do not use it on cooked foods as a dressing or dipping sauce. Leftover marinade can contain bacteria that make it unsafe for consumption.

Wash hands thoroughly before and after preparing any food product.

#### Cooking food on the grill

- Always use a food thermometer to ensure meat is thoroughly cooked.
- Cooked meat to the following proper internal temperatures:



- Beef, pork, lamb and veal: 145 degrees Fahrenheit (allow three minutes to rest before consuming)
- Ground meats: 160 degrees Fahrenheit
- Chicken: 165 degrees Fahrenheit

#### Picnic cookouts and barbecues

- Use an insulated cooler filled with ice, frozen gel packs or other frozen food to serve as a cold source.
- A full cooler can maintain its chilled temperature longer than a partially filled one.
- Avoid placing a cooler in the direct sunlight.
- Avoid repeatedly opening the cooler so food stays colder, longer.
- Certain foods always must be kept cold such as raw meat, poultry, seafood, deli and luncheon meats, sandwiches, summer salads, cut-up fruit and vegetables and perishable dairy products.

Cover food such as cooked hamburgers or hotdogs, condiments, cheese slices and others with a clear cover or wrap to prevent flies from landing and spreading their germs.

#### Storing and eating leftovers

- Store leftovers in the refrigerator within two hours after cooking.
- Divide leftover into smaller portions and store them in shallow, airtight containers. These leftovers should then be eaten within three to four days.
- Consider freezing large amounts of leftovers for later use. Freeze immediately and eat within six months.
- Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees Fahrenheit, and do not consume leftovers that look or smell strange.

FAPC, a part of OSU's Division of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, helps to discover, develop and deliver technical and business information that stimulates and supports the growth of value-added food and agricultural products and processing in Oklahoma.

# Tips to help cut home cooling costs this summer



When it comes to reducing home cooling costs during the summer, some people think adjusting the thermostat is all they can do.

Fortunately, there are several things that can help put a dent in the cost of keeping a home cool, said Gina Peek, [Oklahoma State University Extension](#) housing and consumer specialist.

“We all know Oklahoma summers can be hot. Luckily, consumers don’t have to break the bank with cooling costs,” she said, offering tips to help keep utility bill as low as possible.

For example, efficient thermostat operations can make a huge difference. Set the thermostat to 78 degrees when at home and use fans to keep cool while spending less. Obviously, in the Oklahoma heat a fan cannot replace the air conditioner, but Peek said ceiling fans and oscillating fans can help circulate cool air in your home. This is especially important when the humidity is high. Turn the fan off when leaving the home. Fans cool people – not rooms – through a wind chill effect.

She also suggested making sure hot air isn’t leaking into the home. Seal cracks and openings, and use weather-stripping around doors and windows.

Homeowners should schedule regular maintenance to make certain the air conditioning system is in tip-top shape. A maintenance checkup could help avoid a big problem later on, also. Make sure the air ducts in your home are properly insulated, especially those that pass through the attic or any other non-air conditioned areas.

“It could be cost effective to have a specialist come in to check for holes or leaks in the duct work,” she said. “To help ensure air flow, make sure furniture does not obstruct the air conditioning vents. Close off unused rooms and close vents in those rooms. Vacuum registers from time to time, and remember to change the HVAC air filter.”

Take care not to add heat with appliances and lighting. For example, use the cooktop or grill outside instead of using the oven. Peek said that while natural light is refreshing, the sun’s heat pouring through the windows can raise the temperature in your home. Keep blinds and drapes closed during the day to help block heat.

“While you’ll probably see some sort of increase in your utility bills during the summer months, utilizing these tips will help consumers stay cool without breaking the bank,” Peek said.

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# OSU Extension Guidance for OHCE Groups

**OHCE guidance for meetings during Phase 3 (June 1 – Until further notice):**

- **If you are 65 and older or have a compromised immune system, you are “safer-at-home”.**
- Advise members in advance that if they have any symptoms or feel unwell, they should not attend.
- Indoor group meetings can take place with 50 or fewer people only if social distancing can be practiced.
- Hosts and participants provide and wear face coverings and bring their own hand sanitizer.  
The host should frequently disinfect high-touch areas, including door handles, restroom surfaces, tables, handrails, etc.
- Hosts should advise anyone who appears sick to return home.
- **If Kay County is experiencing increased numbers in COVID 19 outbreaks please consider not meeting.**

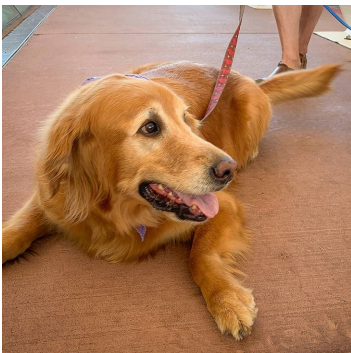
**Should you provide food at your meeting?** At this time, we recommend food or snacks not be provided as part of OHCE meetings. If you feel you need to provide food or snacks, please communicate with your OHCE Advisor on recommended safety protocols.

## OSU Extension Office Open to the public

The Kay County Courthouse and the OSU Extension Office is open to the public as of June 8. If you need to drop off anything we still have a drop box for soil, water and forage and we can meet you in the parking lot if you do not feel comfortable coming into the office. If you do come to the office here are a few of our requests:

1. Office visitors are seen by appointment or first-come, first-served basis.
2. Visits will be one person at a time with social distancing maintained within the office and outside the office.
3. Face coverings must be worn by staff and clientele, alike.

We are looking forward to continue serving the citizens of Kay County and thank you for your understanding and safe practices. For more information on the coronavirus please look at OSU Extension Coronavirus Resources website at <https://extension.okstate.edu/coronavirus.html>



## Keeping pets safe in the summer heat

Clear blue skies and summer sun means many Oklahomans will be spending time outdoors. Some pet owners enjoy bringing their furry friends along on summer activities. Although many animals like spending time outside, pet owners need to take precautions to ensure they stay safe in the summer heat, said Dr. Rosslyn Biggs, [Oklahoma State University Extension](#) veterinarian and director of continuing education for the university's College of Veterinary Medicine.

“Humans take precautions such as staying hydrated and applying sunscreen when spending time outdoors in the heat. It’s just as important to take heat-related precautions for your pet,” Biggs said. “Dog’s don’t sweat like people – instead they pant to cool themselves. Excessive panting indicates your pet is overheated. As the heat increases, body functions begin to shut down.” As for car rides, leaving a pet in a hot vehicle is a life-threatening mistake. Biggs said cars’ interiors heat up quickly, even if the air temperature is only 80 degrees. The interior of a vehicle can reach 115 degrees in just 15 minutes.

“When dogs pant to cool themselves, inhaling hot air from inside a vehicle has little cooling effect and the animal can quickly overheat in just a few minutes,” she said. “As much as you enjoy your pet’s company, and as much as they enjoy rides in the car, it’s best to leave your furry friend at home on hot days.”

For those who enjoy a good run with a canine friend, Biggs said to keep in mind asphalt roads and walking trails can be too hot and burn the pads on a dog’s feet. Before heading out, place your hand or bare foot on the running surface. If the surface is uncomfortable to human touch, it also is too hot for a dog. She suggested going for a short run or walk early in the day or later in the evening when the temperature is more bearable.

For those who enjoy lake trips, do not assume a pet dog will drink lake water. Be sure to always bring a bowl and a supply of fresh water to keep the dog hydrated. The same is true at home. Sun coming through a window can heat up a water bowl, and most dogs will not drink hot water no matter how thirsty they are. Biggs said for pets who stay outside during the day, make sure the water bowl is in a place that’s shaded and cannot be tipped over. If possible, give your dog fresh, clean water several times throughout the day. “Freeze containers of water to put in your pet’s outdoor water bowl,” she said. “This will help ensure your furry friend’s water stays cooler for a longer period of time.” Access to shade in the yard is an absolute must for pets. A small kiddie pool is a great way to provide a fun cooling-off spot where Rover can play.

Despite all precautions, a pet may still show signs of heat stress or heat stroke. Signs of heat stroke include heavy panting that does not resolve as the pet rests, increasing distress, a tongue color that is dark red to almost purple, weakness or collapse, hyper-salivation, vom-



## Kay County Extension Office

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## KAY COUNTY EXTENSION

*Oklahoma Home & Community Education, Inc. is a local and state wide partner with Cooperative Extension which brings the best knowledge from OSU to its members. Join a local OHCE group and enjoy programs that help make Oklahomans be their best.*

[www.OHCE.okstate.edu](http://www.OHCE.okstate.edu)



*Family & Consumer Sciences helps communities, families, youth and individuals address issues of health, wealth and well-being through research-based Extension education and programs that are proven to work.*

iting and labored breathing. Dogs' gums often appear redder early on when an animal is overheated and become paler when excessively overheated. In addition, a dog's gums may be dry or sticky if the animal is not staying adequately hydrated.

"If you suspect a dog or cat is suffering from heat stroke, move him to a cooler environment immediately and apply cool water to the abdomen, ears and foot pads. Don't pour ice water over the whole animal, submerge your pet in a tub of cold water, or cover it in a cold, wet blanket, as these all may result in cooling your animal too quickly and decreasing blood flow to important areas," Biggs said. Once stable, get the animal to a veterinarian as quickly as possible, even if the pet seems to be cooling down and the body temperature seems normal. Biggs said heat can cause internal damage that's not immediately obvious.

"As a pet owner, it's vital to establish a good relationship with a local veterinarian, not only for emergency situations, but also for regular checkups," she said. "If you travel with your pets, get veterinarian recommendations for the area to which you're traveling in the event your pet gets sick." Keeping a dog well-groomed is another way to reduce the risk of heat stress and help keep the animal more comfortable in the summer heat. A natural coat that has been groomed offers protection from sunburn and acts as cooling insulation. Shaving your dog's coat will take away that protection. "Remember, your pet can't tell you in words when something is wrong. As responsible pet owners, it's your job to protect and provide for your pet," Biggs said. "If you're feeling uncomfortably warm, it's a sure bet your dog is, too."