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For Better Living
Grill It Safe and Healthy

There's something special about grilling out-of-doors, whether on the patio or in the park. It gives foods a wonderful flavor and creates a festive mood of summer celebration. Today, grilling means more than hamburgers and hot dogs. Shishkabobs, turkeys, fruits and a variety of vegetables all show up on the grill.

For safety and good health, it's important to make sure the recipes and the grilling methods you use discourage the growth of microbes and the production of cancer-causing components. Use these simple guidelines for a safe outdoor meal, whether it's marinated shishkabobs, barbecued chicken or your favorite grilled franks.

- * Select meats for grilling that are low in fat and trim off excess fat before cooking. Research shows that the higher the fat level in meats, the more carcinogens are produced during charcoal broiling.

- * Keep meat, poultry, salads and other perishables refrigerated or in an insulated cooler with ice until ready to grill.

- * Marinate meats in a glass dish in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Once the meat has been put on the grill, it's best to throw any left over marinade out. It will contain any bacteria found on the surface of the raw meat. If you want to use some of the marinade as a sauce or dip, separate it into another container before starting the marinating process.

- * Precooking can save time at the grill site and reduce charring. However, for safety's sake, make sure foods go directly from the microwave or oven to the grill. Foods also may be completely cooked, then quickly cooled for reheating on the grill later.

- * Take outside only the quantity of food that you will cook and eat. Foods should not sit in warm temperatures for more than two hours. When it's over 85 degrees Fahrenheit, the time limit should be an hour or less.

- * For safety and quality, make sure the coals are ready before adding the food to the grill. Coals should show a light coating of ash for optimal heat. Cook meat until done, but not charred.

- * Discourage flare-ups, since burning juice or fat can produce harmful smoke. If smoke from dripping fat is too heavy, move the food to another section of the grill, rotate the grill, or reduce the heat. If you have a gas or electric grill, lower the temperature setting. For conventional grills, use a squirt bottle of water to dampen the coals.

- * When possible, use a drip pan to catch dripping fat. Metal drip pans are available where

outdoor cooking equipment is sold, or you can make your own from heavy duty aluminum foil. Make sure that the drip pan does not rest on burning coals. With gas or electric grills, follow the manufacturer's instructions on the use and placement of drip pans.

* Serve food from the grill on a clean platter, not one that has raw, possibly contaminated juices on it.

* After grilling food, serve it immediately to keep hot foods hot.

* Clean the grill after each use.

* Refrigerate any leftovers promptly. If this is not possible and the perishable foods will sit at warm temperatures longer than two hours, the safest motto is "when in doubt, throw it out."

Source: Colorado Cooperative Extension

Veggie Pork Kabobs

3/4 cup orange juice concentrate

3/4 cup orange marmalade

2 tablespoons teriyaki or soy sauce

2 boneless pork loin chops, cut into 1 inch pieces

1 medium red pepper, cut into 1 inch pieces

1 medium green pepper, cut into 1 inch pieces

1 medium onion, cut into eighths

In a bowl, combine the orange juice concentrate, marmalade and teriyaki sauce. Pour 1 1/4 cups into a large resealable bag. Add pork, peppers and onion. Seal bag and turn to coat. Refrigerate at least 1 hour. Cover and refrigerate remaining marinade.

Coat grill rack with nonstick cooking spray before lighting the grill. Drain and discard the marinade. Alternately arrange meat and vegetables on skewers. Grill kabobs, uncovered, over medium heat for 20 - 25 minutes or until meat juices run clear, turning often. Serve with the reserved marinade. Yield: 2 servings.