

NATIONAL GRILLING MONTH

MAXIMIZE FLAVOR MINIMIZE HARM

July is National Grilling Month and one of the best things about summer is firing up the grill! However, before you fire up the grill, know that grilling animal proteins can be harmful to your health when not taking proper precautions. Studies show that when exposing animal proteins to high heat from open flames on the grill, toxic chemicals are formed that negatively impact our health. The longer the meat is exposed, the greater the risk. But no need to give up grilled meat – just follow the safety tips below to maximize flavor and minimize harm.

TOXIC CHEMICALS FORMED DURING GRILLING

Carcinogens: Heterocyclic amines (HCAs) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) cause changes in DNA that may increase the risk of cancer.

Other: Advanced glycation end products (AGEs) are linked to chronic disease, memory loss and premature aging.

- 1. Marinate your meat.** Marinades create a protective barrier between the meat's proteins and the grill's high heat, which may reduce the risk of toxins developing. They add flavor too!
- 2. Avoid burning.** Some char is unavoidable; however, excessive char can contain toxins. Remove all charred or burned areas off food before eating.
- 3. Continuously turn.** Turning meat often can reduce carcinogen formation.
- 4. Shorten grill time.** Use another heat source to partially cook your meat, such as a microwave, oven or pan before grilling.
- 5. Size matters.** To speed up the cooking time, cut meat into smaller pieces.
- 6. Grill lean meats or seafood instead.** Fatty pieces of meat are more likely to drip fat into the flames and create excess smoke, which contains toxins.
- 7. Clean your grill.** Scrub your grill with a brush before and after you grill to remove the buildup of toxins. Your food will taste better too.
- 8. Eat veggies with your grilled meat.** While they will not cancel out the effects of charbroiled meats completely, the antioxidants in the plant foods will work hard to reduce the harmful effects of toxins on your body.

KEEP FOOD SAFE

Grill with food safety in mind. Same kitchen rules apply at the grill. Keep animal protein separated from other food and chilled until use. Thaw and marinate food safely in the refrigerator. Avoid cross-contamination by throwing out marinade used with raw animal protein and using clean utensils. Cook animal protein to proper temperatures. Learn more about food safety at the grill by visiting www.cdc.gov.