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For Immediate Release

Grill up food safety this summer!

York Region offers tips to reduce the risk of food-borne illness during the barbecue season

NEWMARKET – The Regional Municipality of York reminds residents that food-borne illness, also known as food poisoning, can happen if improper techniques are used when preparing and cooking food on barbecues. Follow these simple techniques to help reduce the risk of food-borne illness this summer:

Keep hot food hot and cold food cold:

- Keep food out of the temperature danger zone between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F); to do this, keep hot food hot, at least 60°C (140°F), and keep cold food cold at 4°C (40°F) or colder
- Refrigerate or freeze meat after purchase
- Thaw meat in the refrigerator, never at room temperature or on the counter
- Eat cooked food items while they are still hot
- Refrigerate leftover food as soon as possible

Prepare food carefully:

- Always wash your hands with liquid soap and water before and after handling raw meat
- Do not reuse plates; avoid cross-contamination by placing cooked meat on clean plates
- Do not let any juices from meat come in contact with other food or food preparation
- Always use a clean cutting board
- Keep raw meat separate from other foods; other food should not come into contact with raw or uncooked meat

Cook food thoroughly:

- Hamburgers and other meats should be cooked thoroughly; ideally, a thermometer should be used to make sure the internal temperature is above 71°C (160°F)
- If you don't have a thermometer, make sure the meat is well done or the core is brown and the juices run clear
- Whole poultry should be cooked to an internal temperature of 82°C (180°F). Poultry pieces (breasts, thighs, legs, etc.) should be cooked to an internal temperature of 74°C (165°F)

Clean up properly:

- After coming in contact with meat, dishes, cutting boards and counters need to be washed with hot, soapy water and then sanitized with diluted bleach
- Use 2 millilitres (approximately one-half teaspoon) of household bleach to 1 litre (4 cups) of water to provide enough sanitizer

Common symptoms of food-borne illnesses include vomiting, diarrhea, nausea and fever. Residents who think they may be experiencing a food-borne illness should seek medical attention.

For more information on this or any other public health related program, please contact **York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653**.

For more information on The Regional Municipality of York, please visit www.york.ca

- 30 -

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