

# W.O.W.

WAC ON WELLNESS

## HEALTHY GRILLING TIPS

It's grilling season in Wisconsin! Cooking outside is fun and flavorful. Keep it safe by following these simple tips:

### TIP 1: MARINATE YOUR MEAT

While we do not know exactly why, studies consistently demonstrate that marinating meat dramatically reduces carcinogens. The marinade may act as a physical barrier to protect the meat from intense heat, or antioxidants in the marinade may chemically combat carcinogens. Whatever the reason, it makes sense to add flavor to your grilled meats by marinating before cooking.

### TIP 2: COOK ON A CLEAN GRILL

Use a brush before and after grilling. Your food will taste better, and carcinogens left on the grate will be kept to a minimum.

### TIP 3: DEVELOP A FEEL FOR FLIPPING TIME

No one likes a burnt burger, but flipping too soon can cause your meat to tear apart. It's time to flip when a gentle wiggle loosens your steaks and burgers.

### TIP 4: AVOID FLARE UPS

Flare-ups happen when fat drips onto the flames and creates carcinogen-containing smoke. Grilling leaner meats, poultry, and fish limits the chance of fatty drippings, which means carcinogens are greatly reduced.

### TIP 5: AVOID BURNING

Part of the flavor of grilled food comes from charring, but too much is unhealthy. Lessen the risk of carcinogens by not overcooking. Be sure to remove all blackened or charred portions of your meat before eating.

### TIP 6: PROTECT AGAINST BACTERIA

The USDA recommends cooking ground beef to 160 degrees. Remember that ground meat spoils much quicker than a whole piece of meat, so preferably cook it the same day or freeze it. Flip burgers frequently. A study in the Journal of Food Protection advised flipping every 30 seconds for optimal E.coli reduction. Another study found that even when two patties both reached 160 degrees, the one flipped more often had one-fifth the E.coli.

### TIP 7: USE THE WHOLE GRILL SURFACE

Grills often have hot spots, so move your meat around as you cook.

### TIP 8: MINIMIZE TIME ON THE GRILL

The faster foods are cooked, the less likely they are to contain carcinogens. Don't cook meat past its required internal temperature: 165 degrees for ground poultry; 160 degrees for ground red meats or mixtures and fresh pork; 145 degrees for red meat steaks or chops.

### TIP 9: SIZE MATTERS

Smaller grilling portions will help to minimize cooking time. Consider cubed meat for shish kebabs, or choose a quick-cooking option like shrimp or fish.

### TIP 10: TRY GRILLING NON-MEAT OPTIONS

You can make almost anything on a grill! Grilled fruits and vegetables are a great way to incorporate more nutrients into your diet.



BY KIM FLANNERY

Nutrition Director & Registered Dietitian  
kflannery@thewac.com



**Wisconsin Athletic Club**

**FIND YOUR FIT.**

[www.thewac.com/wow](http://www.thewac.com/wow)