

6 Safe Grilling Tips-- What You Need to Know

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One of our favorite past times is backyard grilling of your favorite meats.

Although grilling is enjoyed by millions this article will present some of the downsides and recommended action steps to ensure a good grilling experience.

The Downside of Grilling

Consuming grilled meats on a regular basis carries potential cancer risks.

Specifically, grilling causes meat to form carcinogenic compounds known as **heterocyclic amines, or HCAs**. These are associated with an increased cancer risk. The longer you cook the meat, the more HCAs produced. Charred meat is a sign that a fair amount of HCAs have developed.

Fortunately, there are grilling strategies that can reduce your cancer risk.

- 1:** Cut meat into smaller portions so they cook more quickly and have a shorter exposure to high cooking temperatures
- 2:** Grilling leaner meats with less fat reduces the flames and smoke containing harmful hydrocarbons
- 3:** Flip frequently. Fewer HCAs are formed if you turn meat over frequently while grilling
- 4:** Marinate. Marinating meat, poultry or fish for at least 30 minutes before grilling can decrease the formation of HCAs by creating a barrier between the meat and the flames and smoke.
- 5:** Control the temperature. To avoid cooking meats at high temperatures, light the outside burner and leave the center burner off. Cook the food in the center of the grill.
- 6:** Select hardwoods instead of soft woods. Types of wood can influence HCA formation. Hardwoods, such as hickory and maple burn at lower temperatures than soft woods, such as pine. Cooking with wood that burns at a lower temperature is desirable.