

In the United States this weekend is recognized as a holiday to commemorate the men and women in the military who gave the ultimate sacrifice so that we can enjoy the freedoms we do today. Many people also consider this weekend as the official start of summer and celebrate with picnics, cookouts and other activities. If you are hosting or attending a Memorial Day party, it is important to keep in mind certain safety precautions to ensure everyone not only has a good day but a safe one as well. Here are a few reminders to make sure your weekend celebrations go off without a hitch.

Food Safety Tips

The same techniques that you normally follow are all that is needed to ensure proper food handling. Basic reminders include:

- Hand washing. It is always important to thoroughly wash your hands with soap and warm water before and after handling raw meat, poultry or eggs.
- Fruits and vegetables should be rinsed before eating.
- Cook burgers to at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit to ensure bacteria is no longer present.
- Hot foods should be kept hot and cold foods cold.
- Make sure raw and uncooked meat does not come in contact with other foods. Use separate plates for raw and cooked meats.
- Foods that contain eggs, meat, milk and other dairy products should not be unrefrigerated for longer than an hour.
- Make sure you know and are able to recognize the signs of food poisoning. They include severe cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea and abdominal pain. These symptoms can appear within half an hour of eating contaminated food. People who suspect they have food poisoning should seek medical treatment if the symptoms become severe or last longer than two days.

Alcohol Safety Tips

Beer, wine and other alcoholic beverages are often found at Memorial Day celebrations. Just like any other time of the year, certain precautions must be taken if you or someone you know is going to be drinking alcohol.

- It is illegal for people under the age of 21 to consume alcoholic beverages. There are no exceptions made for family picnics, parties or celebrations regardless of the adult supervision in place. In fact if you provide alcohol or even allow a person under age to consume alcohol at a party both the adult and minor can face legal consequences.
- Never drink and drive. Again, this is common sense advice that is necessary all year long to ensure the safety of everyone involved. If you are hosting a party, make sure anyone who is drinking has a designated driver *or* be willing to let them stay until they are able to drive.
- Moderation is key. There are many celebrations which have a bad ending due to excessive consumption of alcohol. There is nothing wrong with having a few

drinks and having fun with friends. People drinking alcohol may find it difficult to know when the line has been crossed, so it is important to have someone responsible for “keeping an eye” out for potential problems.

Always make sure there is an adult or parent responsible for watching their children. Accidents are always a possibility and it only takes one second for a party to turn into a tragedy if children are left unattended.

Have a great time and enjoy getting together with friends and family this weekend, and remember to pay your respects to those who have given so much so that we can enjoy the liberties we have today.