



Environmental Health
Association (Australia) Inc.
www.envirohealthaustralia.com.au

MEDIA RELEASE

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Comment: For immediate release

Enjoy a gastroenteritis free Australia Day

The Environmental Health Association (Australia) Inc, (EHA) is issuing a reminder to follow some simple steps this Australia Day to avoid potentially serious food borne gastroenteritis. Peter McKenzie – EHA Vice President – says that it is important to remember basic food hygiene principles to protect your family and the community from avoidable risks at barbeques this Australia Day and year round.

“Wash your hands before you start to prepare any food. If soap and water are not going to be available, remember to pack antibacterial wipes or hand rubs to clean your hands first,” he said.

Just as in the kitchen, storing food at the correct temperature is vital to prevent harmful bacteria multiplying rapidly.

“Make sure that raw food is kept *well chilled* prior to cooking and avoid exposing any meat to direct sun light for more than about ten minutes.”

On a hot day bacteria will quickly multiply on a piece of raw meat. Cooking may not be sufficient to completely destroy the bugs that could then cause the gastroenteritis symptoms of vomiting and diarrhoea.

“Keep raw and cooked meat items separate at all times and protect food from further contamination by keeping it safely covered,” advises Mr McKenzie.

If serving marinade as a sauce, always bring it to the boil so bacteria remaining from the meat – that had been soaking in it for hours – will be destroyed.

“Also take great care when sharing space on public barbeque plates that your raw food does not come into contact with another person’s cooked food,” warns Mr McKenzie. Under no circumstances use the same plate or utensils for cooked food that were used to handle the raw items.

“Always make sure there is a clean serving dish and tongs available to receive the cooked food from the hot plate to take to the table.”

Sausages, chicken and burgers should all be well cooked and never eaten if the meat is still pink or the juices not running completely clear.

Each year in Australia there are 17.2 million cases of gastroenteritis with 5.4 million estimated to originate from contaminated food. This leads to 2.1 million days of lost work with 120 reported deaths annually due to food borne illness.

To arrange an interview/photograph with Peter McKenzie, please contact Mary Ward – EHA Media Officer on 041681 3223 or email: media@envirohealthaustralia.com.au
For further information see:

[http://www.ozfoodnet.org.au/internet/ozfoodnet/publishing.nsf/Content/reports-1/\\$FILE/foodborne_report.pdf](http://www.ozfoodnet.org.au/internet/ozfoodnet/publishing.nsf/Content/reports-1/$FILE/foodborne_report.pdf)

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GENERAL INFORMATION

The Environmental Health Association (Australia) Inc (EHAA) is a peak professional body seeking to promote excellence in environmental health practice through education, training and professional development at a local, national and international level.

The overlap between care of the environment and the practice of public health is broadly described as environmental health. Members are passionately committed to the delivery of best practice standards to the public and industry.

As a federated, autonomous incorporated organisation, all decision making is undertaken at State Level. Ten special interest groups (SIG) inform members on important issues and seek comment in the development of policy positions.

EHAA SIGs include: Built Environment, Professional Management, Food Safety, Emergency Management, Waste Management, Climate Change, Indigenous Health, Safety & Health, Public Health and Sustainability.

For more information about the Environmental Health Association (Australia) Inc please contact President Llew Withers via email info@envirohealthaustralia.com.au or EHAA Media Officer Mary Ward on 0416 813 223 or email: media@envirohealthaustralia.com.au