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Picnic season is just around the corner. It is that time to refresh yourself on a few food safety rules so that you and your family stay away from food borne illness. The rules are the same ones you use daily in your kitchen. Due to the nature of a picnic, some of these rules take some planning. With planning, you will have great picnics and memories to share for a lifetime.

Keep in mind the four principals from Fight Bac, 1. Clean 2. Separate 3. Cook and 4. Chill By following these simple guidelines, your picnic will be healthy and fun for all.

Clean, this is tricky in an outdoor setting. Be sure to bring a table covering for picnic tables. Picnic tables sit out in all kinds of weather. The easiest and most effective way is to use a plastic table covering. Keeping your food selections simple will assist you with the whole concept of keeping things clean. Bring plenty of plastic grocery bags to put your dirty utensils in, it may be best to take care of the final clean up when you are back in your own kitchen.

Separate, when we talk about separate, it is keeping meats and produce separate. Just be sure when packing your picnic that you also are mindful of this rule. You will want a clean serving plate for meats if you plan to barbeque.

The cook part of Fight Bac is in reference to making sure foods are not only brought up to the appropriate temperature but also maintained at that temperature. Hot foods should stay hot and cold foods should stay cold. There are kitchen items out there to assist you in keeping foods at the correct temperature. If you are attending a picnic and the food has not been kept hot or cold, I suggest not

eating that selection. Chill is the same as cook, be sure that cold foods are served and kept cold during the picnic. Be sure to follow the 2-hour rule and when in doubt, throw it out.

If you keep in mind the rules of Fight Bac for picnics, you will provide healthy and safe food for your guests. Enjoy your spring and summer!

For more information, visit <http://food.unl.edu/> Also, feel free to contact me by emailing raae.aspen@unl.edu or call me at 308-236-1235.