

## **Grillin' and Chillin' with Chef Jen**

Nothing says summertime like cooking out on the grill! When the temperature outside soars into the 90s, it can be too hot to cook inside. Other times, it may be the *only* way you can cook, especially if you are camping, are out at a park for a picnic or a party. Then of course, there's the summertime holidays, like Memorial Day, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Labor Day, where generally we grill hot dogs, hamburgers and chicken. This week, we will focus on other foods and are grilling up healthy alternatives and venturing out on the "wild side" of grilling by grilling our salad, veggies and dessert! YES- I said grilling our SALAD. Trust me..... it's not a carrot hot dog, it's for-real-salad-grilling. 😊

Let's address the "elephant in the room". Is grilling a healthy option? The answer is yes, BUT to an extent.

### **Here's why:**

- Grilling and smoking meats (including chicken and fish) causes the "Maillard Reaction." In layman's terms, when you char or cook the meat (animal protein) until it's black, or has the black grill lines, it produces many different compounds that contribute to the taste and flavors of those meat. But it also produces HCA's and PAH's, which are compounds that are known carcinogens. They are also created when the juices from proteins drip down onto the flames, its causes smoke or a larger flare up.
- Carcinogens cause cancer. THIS DOES NOT MEAN YOU CANNOT CONSUMED GRILLED MEATS! It means, as with everything in nutrition and life, it must be enjoyed in moderation and infrequency. Specifically, grilled or smoked beef, pork and lamb must not exceed 18 oz, or 1.25 lbs, per week.
- Studies have shown that eating the meat rare or medium rare, decreases your chance of cancer vs eating them well done. But, is still a risk if excessively consumed. You also run the risk of foodborne illness by consuming undercooked meat. It's recommended that beef, pork and lamb be cooked to 145°F, or medium (warm, pink center). Rare is ~130°F (cool, red center) and Medium rare (warm red center) is ~ 135°F.

### **Some healthful hints to reduce carcinogens:**

- Sear meats on the stovetop first, to lock in moisture and minimize drippings and flare-ups.
- Remove visible fat and skin from meats and poultry, as they melt and drip to cause flare ups. Skinless, fat-trimmed poultry produce lesser carcinogens.
- Grill fish in foil, not just to prevent the milliard effect, but also because they can flake and you can lose the meat between the grates.
- Grill all meats, not just fish, wrapped in foil
- CLEAN YOUR GRILL!! Make sure the grates are well scrubbed as the buildup of the juices, smoke and cabon deposits build up and can transfer to items that are cooked

the next time you grill. There are plenty of YouTube videos and internet articles on how to clean different types of grills.

- Finally, enough of the downer stuff! Here's some AMAZING grilling news: When grilled, **FRUITS AND VEGETABLES** do **NOT** create HCAs or PAHs!!!!!! \*\*\* The crowd erupts, champagne sprays, heavenly light shines down\*\*\* YAY!!!!

This week we are doing an entire meal on the grill. The recipes are Grilled Romaine Salad with Golden Balsamic Dressing, Chicken in foil packets and Grilled Pineapple with Coconut Whipped Cream. These items can all be prepped ahead of time and can be ready to go when you are. If you are making the coconut whipped cream from scratch, I using it within the hour. It can separate and doesn't last long.

Enough chit-chat: Let's go grill some veggies, foil packets and dessert!

Bon Appetit!!

~~Chef Jen

