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## **Don't let food become a health hazard**

Queenslanders are this week reminded of the possible health hazards lurking in their food.

Queensland Health's Acting Senior Director of Environmental Health John Piispanen said contaminated food was the source of many cases of gastroenteritis in Queensland each year.

'In fact, national figures show that there are more than 5million cases of gastroenteritis caused by food poisoning in Australia each year,' he said.

'Most food poisoning is easy to prevent by following a few simple hygiene measures and making sure that food is cooked and stored at the right temperature.'

This week is National Food Safety Week 2008 and the theme is *Food Adventures – New foods, New techniques*.

Mr Piispanen said Queenslanders were becoming more adventurous with their diets but this comes with a need to be more aware of food safety.

'It's great to see people are trying different foods and increasing the variety in their diets,' he said.

'What is important though is that people know how to cook these new foods and store them safely. For instance, rabbit meat, like chicken, needs to be cooked until the juices run clear.'

Mr Piispanen said outdoor eating during the warm summer months needed some forward thinking around food safety.

'If food is left sitting out for long periods of time bacteria can begin to grow and this is when it becomes a risk. If possible, leave food chilled for as long as possible, and store it away as soon as possible.'

Tips for keeping your food safe include:

- Keep cold foods cold
- Keep hot foods hot
- Keep your hands and kitchen surfaces clean
- Separate cooked and raw foods
- Cook high-risk foods, such as rabbit, chicken and mince, thoroughly.

For more information visit the Queensland Health website at [www.health.qld.gov.au](http://www.health.qld.gov.au)

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