



Don't Let Foodborne Illness Be A Guest at Your Holiday Table

A large crowd to cook for, a big bird to roast, and too many cooks in the kitchen can lead to foodborne illness from holiday dining. But handling and cooking a turkey should not be an illness waiting to happen. Following basic recommendations will help ensure safe food and prevent foodborne illness for diners--not only during the holidays, but year-round.

CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces often.

- Keep everything clean while preparing holiday meals.
- Wash hands and kitchen surfaces often with hot soapy water.
- Wash cutting boards, dishes, and utensils after preparing each food item and before going on to the next item.
- Paper towels are recommended for cleaning up kitchen surfaces.

SEPARATE: Don't cross contaminate.

- Cross-contamination is the scientific word for how bacteria can be spread from one food product to another.
- Special attention needs to be given to cross contamination when handling raw meats and ready-to-eat foods.
- Separate raw meat, poultry, and seafood from other foods when shopping at the grocery store and in your refrigerator.
- Use one cutting board for raw meat and poultry and a separate one for other food.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat and poultry unless the plate has been thoroughly cleaned.

COOK: Cook to proper temperatures.

- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat and poultry are cooked to proper temperatures.
- Cook roasts and steaks to at least 145 °F, whole poultry to at least 165 °F in the thigh, and ground beef to 160 °F.
- When reheating, leftovers should be thoroughly heated to 165 °F; sauces, soup, and gravy should be brought to a rolling boil.

CHILL: Refrigerate promptly.

- Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within 2 hours
- Place leftovers into shallow containers for rapid cooling.
- The refrigerator should be maintained at 40 °F or below and the freezer at 0 °F or below. (Use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature.)
- Keep hot foods hot, 140 °F or above, and cold foods cold, 40 °F or below.
- Never defrost food at room temperature.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator, in a cold water bath, or in the microwave.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator.

