DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

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Holiday Food Safety

With any holiday food preparation, safe food handling and storage are important to keep your loved ones safe from foodborne illnesses. Follow these helpful tips to prepare a safe holiday meal for your family:

CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces often. Bacteria that cause food poisoning can survive in many places around your kitchen, including your hands, utensils, and cutting boards.

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm, running water. Be sure to scrub the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your fingernails.
- Wash all surfaces and utensils after each use. Rinsing utensils, countertops, and cutting boards with water won't do enough to stop bacteria from spreading. Clean utensils and small cutting boards with soap and hot water. Clean all surfaces and cutting boards with a bleach solution.
- Wash fruits and vegetables—but **not** meat, poultry, or eggs. Even if you plan to peel fruits and veggies, it's important to wash them first because bacteria can spread from the outside to the inside as you cut or peel them.

SEPARATE: Don't cross-contaminate. Even after you've cleaned your hands and surfaces thoroughly, raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs can still spread illness-causing bacteria to ready-to-eat foods—unless you keep them separate.

- Use separate cutting boards, plates, and utensils for raw (uncooked) fruits and vegetables and for raw (uncooked) meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs.
- Keep meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods while you're shopping at the grocery store.
- Keep meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods in the refrigerator.

COOK: Cook to the right temperature. Many people think they can tell when food is "done" simply by checking its color and texture. However, there's no way to be sure it's safe without following a few important but simple steps.

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- Use a food thermometer. Make sure food reaches its safe minimum cooking temperature. For example, internal temperatures should be 145°F for whole meats (allowing the meat to rest for 3 minutes before carving or eating), 160°F for ground meats, and 165°F for all poultry. Eggs should be cooked until the yolk is firm.
- While food is being served and eaten, keep it hot (at 135 ˚F or above). After meals are over, refrigerate leftover food quickly.
- Microwave food thoroughly (to 165 ˚F).

CHILL: Refrigerate promptly. Bacteria can grow in many foods within two hours unless you refrigerate them.

- Refrigerate foods that tend to spoil more quickly (like fruits and vegetables, milk, eggs, and meats) within 2 hours. Warm foods will chill faster if they are divided into several clean, shallow containers.
- Thaw or marinate foods in the refrigerator, **never** on the counter or in the kitchen sink.
- Know when to throw food out. When in doubt, throw it out!

To learn more about holiday food safety tips, see the Holiday Food Safety Success Kit online.

For more information, contact the County of San Bernardino Department of Public Health Division of Environmental Health Services at (800) 442-2283 or visit our website at www.sbcounty.gov/dph/dehs.

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