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Holiday Food Safety – Bah, Foodbugs!

The holidays are an exciting time of year for many people and for good reason: family, friends, gifts and everyone’s favorite—**food**! While food safety is indeed a year-round goal, the holidays present a number of unique food-safety challenges. Be sure to practice these important [holiday food safety tips](#). For more information about how to keep your family safe, visit



<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/holidays/index.html>.

Norovirus – A Frequent Holiday Guest



Norovirus illness occurs throughout the year but it is most common during the winter months. It is responsible for the majority of illness and outbreaks from contaminated food in the US. Noroviruses are highly contagious; they are estimated to cause as many as 21 million cases of acute gastroenteritis each year.

The virus is spread through direct contact with contaminated food or surfaces, and infected food handlers are often the source of norovirus outbreaks. It’s important that food handlers always practice proper hand hygiene and not prepare food while they are sick.

Norovirus infection can cause serious medical complications in patients who are most vulnerable such as young children, older adults and people with certain health conditions. These complications could result in prolonged hospital stays and even death.

Click [here](#) to view a Norovirus fact sheet designed for food handlers that will help you in your efforts to prevent foodborne illness.

Retail Food Safety (AB 2130) Effective Date: Immediately

This bill requires that food employees minimize bare hand and arm contact with non-prepackaged food that is in a ready-to-eat form. Food employees will be required to use utensils to assemble ready-to-eat food or to place ready-to-eat food on tableware or in other containers. The bill authorizes food employees to assemble or place on tableware or in other containers ready-to-eat food in an approved food preparation area without using utensils if hands are cleaned in accordance with Section 113953.3.

Click [here](#) to view the bill in its entirety.



Need HELP?



Are you a new food facility operator? Are you a food facility operator that would like to improve your facility's letter grade? Would you like resources and educational materials to help maintain compliance with food safety regulations and reduce the most common risk factors that can cause foodborne illness? DEHS's Food Safety Health Education Liaison Program (HELP) can help! HELP was designed to assist food facility operators in assuring safe food handling practices and meeting food safety standards. HELP offers food facility operators:

- One-on-one consultations with an Environmental Health Specialist
- Educational materials
- Mock inspection evaluations addressing points of concern and intervention
- Possible solutions to issues that may be hindering improvement and/or compliance

The first HELP consultation is absolutely **free** for every food facility. Additional consultations during the same year can be conducted at the current hourly rate.

To schedule your HELP consultation, please contact Roseann Catan by email Roseann.Catan@dph.sbcounty.gov or call 800-442-2283.

For more information about HELP, [click here](#).

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If you have any questions or comments, please contact Lana Cao or Marie Jean-Baptiste, Health Education Specialists, at 800-442-2283 We can also be reached by email at Lana.Cao@dph.sbcounty.gov or Marie.Jean-Baptiste@dph.sbcounty.gov.

We appreciate the effort you make to protect the public's health in our County.