

Holiday Food Safety

[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC - safer, healthier people.

When you think about the holidays, does the taste of a freshly baked pumpkin pie or the aroma of a home-cooked turkey dinner come to mind? No matter what's on your menu, food is always a central part of holiday festivities. But holiday meals can take a turn for the worse if food safety isn't a regular ingredient in preparing food.

Foodborne infections continue to be a serious health issue in the United States, causing millions of people to get sick each year. *Salmonella*, *Campylobacter*, and *E. coli* are foodborne diseases associated with meat, poultry, and fish. Infants, young children, older adults, pregnant women, and those with weakened immune systems are at higher risk for severe infections.

Whether you are a seasoned chef or you're preparing your first holiday meal, some simple steps can reduce the risk of foodborne illness ruining your holiday celebrations this year. Remember these four words: clean, separate, cook, and chill.

Clean: Wash your hands with soap and warm water for twenty seconds before and after preparing food. Wash all utensils, dishes, and countertops with hot soap and water. Rinse fresh produce with water.

Separate: Avoid cross-contamination by keeping raw meat and poultry, and their juices, separate from fruits, vegetables, and cooked foods. Never use a utensil on cooked foods that was previously used on uncooked foods, unless it's washed first with soap and water.

Cook: Always use a food thermometer when cooking meat and poultry to make sure it's cooked to a safe internal temperature. Turkey, stuffing, casseroles, and leftovers should be cooked to 165 degrees Fahrenheit; beef, veal, and lamb roasts should be cooked to 145; and ham, pork, and egg dishes should be cooked to 160. When serving people at higher risk for foodborne illness, use a pasteurized egg product in foods containing eggs that will not be cooked to at least 160 degrees Fahrenheit. Examples include eggnog and custard.

Chill: Refrigerate food quickly after serving. Keep the refrigerator at 40 degrees Fahrenheit or below to prevent bacteria from growing. Leftovers should be refrigerated within two hours of being cooked. Never thaw a turkey, ham, or other frozen meat at room temperature. Thawing should be done in the refrigerator. When food is in the "danger zone" - between 40 and 140 degrees Fahrenheit - foodborne bacteria multiply. Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.

For more information, please visit www.cdc.gov, www.befoodsafe.org, and www.usda.gov. Be food safe this holiday season. Happy eating!

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.