



# HOLIDAY HINTS FOR FOOD SAFETY

Here are some helpful hints for holiday food preparation.  
**DON'T LET FOODBORNE ILLNESS SPOIL YOUR HOLIDAY CELEBRATIONS THIS YEAR!**

- (1) **Cook all poultry products to an internal temperature of 165°F.** Use a food thermometer to monitor the internal meat temperatures.
- (2) **KEEP HOT FOODS HOT AND COLD FOODS COLD!** To be more specific, if you are dealing with potentially hazardous foods (those that will support the growth of pathogenic organisms such as high-protein foods like meats, cheeses, dairy products, etc.), hot foods should be held at 140°F or above after being cooked and cold foods should be held at 41°F or below.
- (3) **Don't hesitate, REFRIGERATE!** Don't leave potentially hazardous foods out of refrigeration following your holiday meal for an afternoon snack. Foods held at room temperature are more likely to allow bacterial growth.
- (4) **TO STUFF OR NOT TO STUFF.** The USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline recommends that the stuffing be cooked outside the bird: "Since there is no guarantee that the stuffing will reach 165°F at the same time the turkey reaches 180°F in the innermost part of the thigh".
- (5) **WASH YOUR HANDS WHENEVER NECESSARY!** The best way to prevent the spread of disease is to wash your hands. Here is a list of times when handwashing should be done:
  - ***BEFORE YOUR BEGIN TO PREPARE FOOD!***
  - ***After using the restroom***
  - ***After emptying the trash/garbage***
  - ***After handling raw potentially hazardous foods such as meat and egg products***
  - ***After touching any part of the body***
  - ***After coughing or sneezing***
  - ***During food preparation at anytime that your hands become contaminated***
- (6) **Do not defrost/thaw foods at room temperature.** Bacteria will grow rapidly on meat at room temperature. **PLAN AHEAD!** Thaw under refrigeration so no part of the product rises above 41°F. *Hint:* Plan one day to thaw in the refrigerator for each five pounds of turkey (20 pound turkey = 4 day thawing time). If you are short on time, use the cold-water technique. A frozen turkey can be thawed in a matter of hours under COLD running water. Keep the temperature below 41°F.
- (7) **Don't cross-contaminate!** Properly wash and sanitize all utensils, dishes, and countertops after using them for preparing raw potentially hazardous foods – and before using them for ready-to-eat foods that will not undergo any further cooking.
- (8) **Reheat all potentially hazardous foods to 165°F** within two hours of taking it out of the refrigerator.



**Protect your holiday meal using these helpful hints and prevent that uninvited guest, Foodborne Illness, from spoiling your Holiday celebrations. **HAPPY HOLIDAYS!****