



FOOD SAFETY TIPS for the Holidays

Food plays an important role in most holiday celebrations. While most of us assume our food is safe to eat, we must not take food safety for granted as thousands of people in Ontario suffer from foodborne illness each year. Foodborne illness, also known as food poisoning, can occur due to simple mistakes in the kitchen that can be prevented. Follow these safe food handling tips to decrease the risk of foodborne illness during the Holiday Season.

KEEP IT CLEAN

- Always clean your hands, utensils and cooking surfaces thoroughly before preparing food.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and often during the food preparation process.
- After each use, clean all cutting boards (with soap and hot water) and sanitize to kill surface bacteria. Be particularly thorough where raw turkey and other meats have been prepared.
- Wash clean kitchen towels and cloths often as these are a common source of bacteria and can lead to cross-contamination. To prevent the spread of bacteria, use separate towels and cloths for each part of the kitchen.
- Keep food covered to protect it from insects and accidental “splashing” from other foods.
- Let dishes air dry.

HOW TO SANITIZE

1. Wash dishes and utensils well in hot, soapy water. Rinse well.
2. Then soak them in a **sanitizing solution** of 10 mL (2 tsp) of liquid household chlorine bleach mixed with 1L (4 cups) of water for 45 seconds.
3. Spray the solution on counters and cutting boards and let stand for at least 1 minute.
4. Let all articles air dry (or use disposable towels).

PREPARING AND SERVING HOLIDAY BUFFETS

- Remember the “2-hour rule” when entertaining with a large meal or buffet. Don’t let perishable foods linger for longer than two hours in The Danger Zone which is the temperature range between 4°C (40°F) and 60°C (140°F).
- Prepare foods quickly, cook them thoroughly and serve promptly. Turkey must be cooked to an internal temperature of 82°C, and all other hazardous foods, especially raw meats or dishes made with raw meat, must be cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 74°C. Keep hot foods hot **at 60°C or hotter** with warming trays, chafing dishes or crock pots. Keep cold foods cold **at 4°C or colder** by placing serving dishes on crushed ice or serving them directly from the refrigerator.
- Keep replacement dishes of food hot in the oven or cold in the refrigerator prior to serving.
- Do not add new food to a serving dish that has been sitting at room temperature for more than 2 hours.



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PREPARING AND COOKING TURKEY

- Never thaw turkey on the kitchen counter. Thaw turkey under cold running water (in leak-proof plastic) OR thaw in a large container on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator to prevent leakage into other foods. Start thawing the frozen turkey in the refrigerator several days before roasting. Allow 24 hours of defrosting time for each 2.5 kg (5.5 pounds) of turkey.
- Don't let any raw juices come in contact with other food. Clean and sanitize any food preparation equipment, counters or cutting boards that come into contact with raw juices before using them to prepare ready-to-eat foods.
- Never slow-cook turkey. Set the oven to no lower than 177°C (350°F). Use a food thermometer, inserted into the thickest part of the breast or thigh meat, to check that the turkey reaches a minimum internal temperature of 82°C (185°F). Stuffing should reach a minimum internal temperature of 74°C (165° F).
- Always wash the food thermometer and other utensils used on raw or partially cooked foods before using them to check food temperatures again.
- Serve turkey and stuffing immediately after cooking. Replace empty platters with hot turkey and stuffing that has been kept hot in the oven at a minimum temperature of 60°C (140°F).

CIDER

Popular holiday beverages, such as mulled cider and other drinks made from unpasteurized apple cider may contain harmful bacteria. Use ciders labeled as pasteurized, or bring unpasteurized cider to a boil before serving. This is especially important when serving cider to children, the elderly, and people with weakened immune systems.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

EGGNOG AND OTHER RECIPES WITH EGGS

- Be sure to handle these tasty treats safely. Commercial, ready-made eggnog is prepared using pasteurized eggs and does not require heating. Homemade eggnog may contain harmful bacteria if not prepared properly. Serve cooked eggnog using the directions below or use pasteurized egg products, found in most grocery stores.
- If you choose to make eggnog with whole eggs, heat the egg-milk mixture to at least 71°C (160°F). Refrigerate at once, dividing large amounts into shallow containers so that it cools quickly.
- Take extra care with sauces, mousses, and any other recipes calling for raw or lightly-cooked eggs. Use pasteurized egg products, or bring egg mixtures to a temperature of at least 71°C (160°F).
- Store all products with eggs in the refrigerator.

LEFTOVERS AND STORAGE

- While it is tempting to leave turkey and other foods at room temperature for snacking after a meal, you should refrigerate leftovers promptly in loosely covered, shallow containers so they cool quickly. Once food is cooled, secure cover. Avoid overstocking the refrigerator to allow cool air to circulate freely.
- Remove turkey meat from the bone and store separately from stuffing and gravy.
- Reheat leftovers to at least 74°C (165°F). Bring gravy to a full, rolling boil and stir during the reheating process.
- Use leftovers within two to three days.

Keep food out of THE DANGER ZONE.

Perishable food left in

The Danger Zone (4°C - 60°C)

for more than 2 hours must be thrown out.

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!