

Food Safety During the Holidays

Food is an important part of many holiday celebrations. But don't let food-related illness ruin your holiday.

Food safety boils down to three basic rules:

- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold.
- Keep everything in the kitchen clean.
- Wash hands frequently.

Refrigerate cooked foods that are not served immediately. If food is left unrefrigerated longer than two hours, the chance of bacterial growth increases.

Cooking for Groups

Reheating Food
Reheat cooked food to at least **165°F**
In the microwave
On the stove top
In the oven

Keep Cold Food Cold
Store food in the refrigerator at **40°F** or below
Place cold food in containers on ice to keep food below **40°F**

Keep Hot Food Hot
Cooked food should be held at or above **140°F**
Use heated chafing dishes, warming trays, or slow cookers to keep hot food hot

Serving Food
Use clean containers and utensils to serve food

Two-Hour Rule
If perishable food is kept at room temperature, do not leave it out for more than **2 hours**

DANGER ZONE
What is the DANGER ZONE?
Temperature range (between 40°F and 140°F) where bacteria multiplies quickly.

Do not use a chafing dish, warming tray, or slow cooker to reheat food – this leads to **too much time in the Danger Zone!**

USDA
Ad Council
ADDITIONAL SOURCE: CDC
For more summer food safety tips, go to **FoodSafety.gov**
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PREVENT BACTERIA FROM GETTING INTO FOOD

- Hands should always be thoroughly washed with soap and warm water before handling food.
- Towels and wash cloths should be kept clean. Sponges are known for harboring bacteria, so eliminate or limit their use in the kitchen.
- Counter tops and utensils should be washed with hot, soapy water between each step in food preparation.

PROPER THAWING AND COOKING

Many warm-blooded animals, turkeys and other poultry often harbor Salmonella and other organisms that can cause food-related illness. Purchased and packaged meats, too, can be contaminated with these organisms. Proper thawing and cooking are important to avoid these illnesses. The following precautions should be taken:

- Store all raw meat products on the bottom shelf or separate from other food products in your refrigerator especially during the thawing process. This will help keep raw meat juices from contaminating other foods.
- Start early and thaw turkey in a refrigerator or in a place where the air temperature is no higher than 40° F. A 20-pound turkey will take about three days to thaw completely in a refrigerator.
- Do not begin cooking a turkey until it has completely thawed.
- It is safer and preferred that stuffing be cooked separately. However, if you do stuff the bird, do so just before cooking it. Stuff it loosely so the stuffing cooks thoroughly. Remember to wash hands before stuffing the bird.
- Be sure meat and poultry reach the temperature indicated in the chart at the end of this brochure to make sure they are cooked thoroughly.
- Use a meat thermometer to check the temperature. Insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the meat, avoiding fat and bone. For poultry, insert it into the thick part of the thigh next to the body.
- Wash and rinse the thermometer between uses to prevent possible contamination.
- Cook meat and poultry completely without interrupting the cooking process; an interruption could allow bacteria to grow.

LEFTOVERS

- After the meal, immediately refrigerate leftovers such as meat, dressing, gravy or soups in small shallow containers.
- Do not allow foods to sit several hours at room temperature as this will provide time for the growth of disease-causing bacteria. Refrigerate stuffing and other items separately from the bird.
- Do not cool leftovers on the kitchen counter. Divide them into smaller portions so they will cool more quickly and put them in the refrigerator as soon as possible.
- Serve leftovers either very cold (directly from the refrigerator) or very hot (heated to 165° F or higher).
- Cover leftovers to reheat. This helps maintain moisture and ensures that meat is heated thoroughly.
- Eat refrigerated turkey within three to four days and stuffing and gravy within one to two days.

When made with raw products, there are some foods that should be avoided altogether. These include oysters and egg drinks, mousse or bread pudding, unless made with pasteurized eggs

or an egg substitute. Young children, the elderly, pregnant women and those who are ill or whose immune systems are compromised should not eat raw or undercooked animal products or raw oysters unless they have consulted their physician.

Meat and poultry that are cooked thoroughly to these temperatures are generally safe to eat.

FRESH BEEF		
	FAHRENHEIT	CELSIUS
Medium Rare	145	63
Medium	160	71
Well Done	170	77
Ground Beef	160	71
FRESH VEAL		
Medium Rare	145	63
Medium	160	71
Well Done	170	77
FRESH LAMB		
Medium Rare	145	63
Medium	160	71
Well Done	170	77
GAME		
Deer	165	74
Rabbit	180	82
Duck	180	82
Goose	180	82
RATTIES		
Ostrich	160	71
Rhea	160	71
Emu	160	71
EGGS		
Fried, Poached	(Cook until yolk and white are firm)	
Casseroles	160	71
Sauces, Custards	160	71
POULTRY		
Chicken	180	82
Turkey	180	82
Turkey Roast (boneless)	170	77
Stuffing (inside or outside the bird)	165	74
FRESH PORK, CHOPS, ROAST, RIBS		
Medium	160	71
Well Done	170	77
CURED PORK		
Ham, Fresh	160	71
Sausage, Fresh	160	71

Note: Home cooking temperatures are slightly higher than commercial cooking temperatures to provide a safety margin in case of variation in the accuracy of home thermometers and equipment.

Consumer guidelines from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Services, and from U.S. Food and Drug Administration.