

Contact: Lisa Marshall
Taney County Health Department
320 Rinehart Road
Phone: (417) 334-4544
Email: lisa.marshall@lpha.mo.gov



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 22, 2021

Food Safety During the Holidays

The holiday season is quickly approaching and with it get togethers, conversations and eating. To keep the conversation going and friends and family coming back, keeping food safe is vital. The environmental health experts at the Taney County Health Department have four easy steps to keep your food safe.

- 1. Clean:** Bacteria can be spread throughout the kitchen and onto food. To stay safe, always wash your hands with warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds before preparing food, after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and handling pets. Wash cutting boards and utensils with hot soapy water between different food items. Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables, even those with skins and rinds that are not eaten, because bacteria on the outside can travel to the parts you eat.
- 2. Separate:** Cross contamination can occur when foods at high-risk for causing illness if undercooked, like raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs, spread their germs to foods that are ready-to-eat with no or very light cooking. To avoid cross contamination, separate high-risk foods from other foods in your shopping cart, grocery bags and in the refrigerator. Use different cutting boards for produce and high-risk foods and never place cooked high-risk foods on the same plate that they were on when raw.
- 3. Cook:** Food is safely cooked when the internal temperature gets high enough to kill germs that can make you sick. To be certain food is safely cooked, use a food thermometer. Follow these internal temperature guidelines when cooking meats.
 - 165°F for leftovers, casseroles, and poultry, including ground chicken and turkey
 - 160°F for ground meats, such as beef and pork
 - 145°F for whole cuts of beef, pork, veal, and lamb. Then let sit for 3 minutes before cutting
 - 145°F for fish, or until all the flesh is opaque
- 4. Chill:** Refrigerate foods quickly, as cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Keeping your refrigerator at a constant temperature of 40° F or less is essential to reduce foodborne illness. Only marinate foods in the refrigerator, do not defrost food at room temperature, and divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.

Keeping you and your family safe is easy if you keep these four guidelines in mind this holiday season. For more information, call the Taney County Health Department at (417) 334-4544 or (417) 546-4725.

For more information contact the Taney County Health Department at 417-334-4544, visit our website at www.taneycohealth.org, or like our FaceBook, Instagram and Pinterest pages.

###

The Taney County Health Department envisions a community of healthy people. Every day, we work to achieve this vision through leadership, collaboration, education and service. We value integrity, learning, teamwork, positive communication, quality improvement and dedicated service. Please visit our website <http://www.taneycohealth.org> to learn more about our services.