



# Central Michigan District Health Department

*Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities*



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## PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

**To:** Local News Media  
**From:** Central Michigan District Health Department  
**RE:** Keep Family & Food Safe During the Holiday Season  
**Release Date:** Immediately (November 17, 2021)

### Keep Family & Food Safe During the Holiday Season

*Remember to wear masks, wash hands often, and follow food safety guidelines.*

Tis the season for holiday gatherings of friends and family. As you visit your vaccinated friends and family this holiday season, please keep in mind that those you visit may include people who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19, seasonal flu, and foodborne illness – older people, young children, pregnant women, and anyone with a compromised immune system. Vaccination is the safest option to protect your loved ones from contracting COVID-19 or the flu. If you choose to gather in small groups for the holiday, masks are recommended for those who do not live in the same household. Wash hands often and try to keep social distance.

Additionally, keep the season joyous and protect your guests from foodborne illness by following a few simple food safety steps. “The four basic steps of separate, cook, chill, and clean will go a long way to keep your guests safe from an unwelcome foodborne illness,” stated Steve King, Director of Environmental Health Services for Central Michigan District Health Department.

**Separate:** Keep raw meats separate from cooked foods and vegetables in the refrigerator. It is recommended to store or thaw raw meats in a container on the bottom refrigerator shelf to prevent juices from contaminating foods that will not be cooked. When preparing, keep raw meats separated and use different cutting boards for meats and vegetables.

**Cooking:** Cook to proper temperatures. Foods are properly cooked when they are heated for a long enough time and at a high enough temperature to kill the harmful germs that cause foodborne illness. Follow temperature guidelines provided with the food packaging.

**Chilling:** Refrigerate promptly. Public health officials urge people to refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep most harmful germs from growing. Place leftovers in shallow containers, leaving the cover loose to vent steam. Don't stack the cooling food containers so there is plenty of air circulation.

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Refrigerators should be set at 40 degrees F and the freezer at 0 degrees F to keep stored food at safe temperatures. Don't rely on the natural outdoor temperature on the porch to keep foods at proper temperature.

**Clean:** Keep utensils and hands clean. Wash pans, utensils, and cutting boards with hot soapy water after every use and when switching between raw meats and other foods. Clean countertops and the sink with hot soapy water before and after food preparation. Wash your hands frequently, especially after handling raw meats, using the bathroom, and before starting food preparation. Frequent handwashing will help protect you and your guests from getting a foodborne illness.

"Keep your friends and family safe by following these safety steps and have a happy holiday season," said Director King.

For more information visit: [Food Safety for the Holidays](#) and [Safer Ways to Celebrate Holidays](#).

Protect yourself and your loved ones by getting vaccinated for COVID-19 and the seasonal flu. Get more information and schedule your appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine [here](#) and seasonal flu vaccine [here](#).

This article has been brought to you by Central Michigan District Health Department, which serves the counties of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon. Visit our website at [www.cmdhd.org](http://www.cmdhd.org), LIKE Central Michigan District Health Department on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @CMiDHD.

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