



People Caring for People

Central Michigan District Health Department
For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 109
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Holiday Tips to Prevent Food Borne Illnesses

The holidays are coming around and there is no better way to celebrate than with family and friends. Families will gather around and have big feasts, but it is all yummy in the tummy until the tummy starts to rumble. Unfortunately, without proper education and precautions, a family feast may no longer be any fun. By following the four basic food safety tips, you will reduce the risk of common food borne illnesses.

1. **Clean:** Make sure to wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water. Wash your counters or work surfaces with $\frac{3}{4}$ of a cup of bleach mixed with a gallon of hot water after placing raw or partially cooked foods on the surface, and rinse with water.
2. **Separate:** To prevent the spread of bacteria, do not use the same utensil for different dishes. Prevent cross contamination of foods by using different cutting boards; one for raw meat, and one for fruits and vegetables.
3. **Cook:** It is very important to make sure that you have cooked your food long enough and at the proper temperature. Hot food should be kept at temperatures of 140 degrees F or higher. Use a meat thermometer to check the doneness of the food. See the following chart to determine the internal temperature of meat and poultry to make sure your food is safe to eat. Reheating temperatures need to reach 165 degrees and be held at 140 degrees.
4. **Chill:** Refrigerators should be set at 38- 40 degrees F to keep food at 41 degrees and lower, and the freezer should be set at 0 degrees F. Make sure to keep your cold food at a temperature of 41 degrees F or lower and refrigerate meats immediately after they have been cooked.

To avoid risk of food borne illnesses, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), encourages consumers to pay attention to the handling and preparation of food. A good guideline to go by with food temperatures is to keep your hot food hot and cold food cold. Food temperatures other than 140 degrees F or higher **for hot food** and 41 degrees F or lower **for cold**



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food constitute a danger zone in which bacteria can multiply and therefore make family members sick. Remembering these simple steps: of clean, separate, cook, and chill, can make your holiday season much safer and happier.

For additional information of food borne illnesses, you can contact the FDA's Food Information Line toll free at 1-888-SAFEFOOD or the CDC Food Borne Illness Information Line at (404)-332-4597. This article has been brought to you by the Central Michigan District Health Department which serves the residents of Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola, and Roscommon Counties.

Sources:

FDA/Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition. <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov>. December 2003.

Food Borne Illness Prevention Tips. <http://www.hhs.state.ne.us>.

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