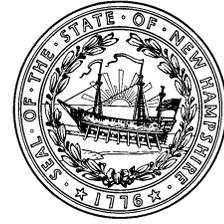


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PRESS RELEASE
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Food Safety Tips for the Holiday Season

Concord, NH – During this busy holiday season, the Department of Health and Human Services’ (DHHS) Bureau of Food Protection wants to remind everyone to follow some important food safety practices to avoid foodborne illnesses, such as Salmonella, *E. coli*, and Campylobacter.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) an estimated 48 million cases of illness, 128,000 hospitalizations, and 3,000 deaths occurred in 2011 in the United States due to foodborne diseases. Symptoms can vary depending on the illness, but some common symptoms are diarrhea, abdominal cramps, and nausea. It is difficult to say with certainty which microbe is causing a given illness without laboratory testing.

“Don’t let germs ruin your holiday activities by not taking proper precautions against foodborne disease,” said Dr. José Montero, Director of Public Health at DHHS. “There are simple tips for safe food preparation that we should all be following every day, not just at holidays, but large gatherings and people cooking outside their comfort zone can present an opportunity for bacteria to be introduced into our food.”

The following simple precautions should always be followed by cooks and food handlers to reduce the possibility of anyone becoming sick:

- **Separate:** Use a separate cutting board for cooked foods and raw foods and always wash them after use. Do not cut raw vegetables on the same cutting board as raw meat. Avoid cross contamination. Wash any utensil after preparing one food item before going on to the next item.
- **Clean:** Always wash hands before touching any food. Wash hands and surfaces often during food preparation and afterward.
- **Cook:** Make sure all meats are thoroughly cooked by using a meat thermometer: turkey, stuffing, and casseroles to 165°F; veal, beef, and lamb roasts to 145°F; and ham, pork, ground beef, and egg dishes to 160°F. When reheating, leftovers should be thoroughly heated to 165°F.
- **Chill:** Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours. The refrigerator should be maintained at 40°F or lower and the freezer should be at 0°F or lower. Keep hot foods hot, 140°F or hotter, and cold foods cold, 40°F or below. Never defrost food at room

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temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, in a cold-water bath, or in the microwave. When using a microwave, meat must be cooked immediately after. Marinate foods in the refrigerator.

- **Report:** Report suspected foodborne illnesses to the NH Department of Health and Human Services by calling 603-271-4496. Often calls from concerned citizens are how outbreaks are first detected. If a public health official calls you to talk about an outbreak your cooperation is important, even if you are not ill.

For more information visit www.usda.gov, www.cdc.gov, www.befoodsafe.org, or www.dhhs.nh.gov.

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