Keep the Holidays Happy & Safe

Make sure food safety is part of your holiday planning from start to finish.

Clean Up

- Thoroughly wash your hands with soap and warm water for a full 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat products.
- Cutting boards should be run through the dishwasher -- or washed with soap and hot water -- after each use.

Separate to Combat Cross-Contamination

- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on a plate or tray in the refrigerator, so raw juices do not drip onto other foods.
- Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry or seafood unless the plate has been washed with hot soapy water.
- Do not spread bacteria with dirty sponges, dishcloths or towels. Bacteria often thrive in the moist areas of these items where bits of food may also exist.
- When you have many people in and out of the kitchen, it is hard to keep track of what has been used to do what. Have a stock of paper towels or freshly cleaned sponges or cloths and soap and hot water to clean food preparation surfaces.

Cook Safely

- For meat, poultry and other dishes, use a food thermometer to make sure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature.
- When it comes to eggs—such as for brunch and eggnog—cook them until the yolks and whites are firm or reach 160 ºF on a food thermometer.
- Cook fish until it is opaque and flakes easily with a fork.
- When microwaving, make sure there are no cold spots in food (where bacteria can survive). For best results, cover, stir and rotate food for even cooking.
- When reheating sauces, soups and gravies, bring them to a boil. Heat other leftovers thoroughly to 165 ºF.

Chill Completely

- Make sure the refrigerator temperature is 40 ºF or below and the freezer 0 ºF or below. Verify these temperatures using an appliance thermometer.
- Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs and other perishables as soon as you get them home from the store.
- Do not leave prepared foods and leftovers out for more than two hours.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Use the refrigerator. You can also thaw foods in airtight packaging in cold water (but change the water every 30 minutes, so the food continues to thaw in cold water).
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.
- Do not stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to keep food safe.

Did You Know?
The average used kitchen sponge harbors billions of bacteria! Consider using paper towels or clean cloth towels.

Happy Holidays!

Adapted from the website for the Partnership for Food Safety Education. (www.fightbac.org)

P.S. Safe Cooking Temperatures - As measured with a food thermometer.

Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures	
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160° F
Turkey, Chicken	165° F
Fresh Beef, Veal Lamb	
Medium Rare	145° F
Medium	160° F
Well Done	170° F
Poultry	
Chicken & Turkey, whole	165° F
Poultry Parts	165° F
Duck & Goose	165° F
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165° F
Fresh Pork	
Medium	160° F
Well Done	170° F
Ham	
Fresh (raw)	160° F
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140° F
Eggs & Egg Dishes	
Eggs	Cook until yolk & white are firm
Egg Dishes	160° F
Seafood	
Fin fish	145° F or until opaque & flakes easily with fork
Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs	Flesh pearly & opaque
Clams, Oysters & Mussels	Shells open during cooking
Scallops	Milky white or opaque & firm
Leftovers & Casseroles	165° F