



NEWS

R E L E A S E

Illinois Department of Public Health

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Holiday Party Hints for Avoiding Food Poisoning

The Do's and Don'ts when it comes to holiday gatherings

SPRINGFIELD – Fancy dips, tempting hors d'oeuvres and delightful desserts are some of the culinary treats we see at holiday dinners, office parties or other celebrations. However, those get-togethers could result in food poisoning if you are not careful. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that each year roughly one in six Americans (or 48 million people) gets sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases. In Illinois, it is estimated that as many as 250,000 cases of foodborne illness may occur each year. However, because these illnesses can be mild and because the vast majority of them occur in the home, many go unreported.

Holiday Hosts – what you should do.

- Keep everything in the kitchen clean.
- Wash hands often during food preparation and while serving.
- Keep hot food hot and cold food cold.

Keep everything in the kitchen clean. Wash counter tops and utensils with hot, soapy water between each step in food preparation. Bacteria from raw meat and poultry can get into other foods if they touch the same surfaces or each other.

Wash hands often during food preparation and while serving. Most bacteria get into food through improper handling. Always wash your hands with soap and warm water before handling food. Bacteria can linger in towels and wash cloths used repeatedly, so make sure to wash them frequently. Also, if someone has diarrhea or vomiting, they should not prepare or serve food for others as they may spread illness through food.

Keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Cooking food thoroughly kills most bacteria that cause food poisoning. Cook meat and poultry thoroughly (see chart below) and use a meat thermometer to check the temperature. Keep hot food at 140°F and store and serve cold foods at or below 40°F. Do not leave food unrefrigerated longer than one hour at a time or the chances of dangerous bacterial growth increase. In other words, do not let potentially hazardous foods reach that intermediate temperature at which microorganisms grow best, between 40°F and 140°F.

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	<u>Fahrenheit</u>
<u>Beef</u>	
Medium Rare	145°
Medium	160°
Well Done	170°
Ground beef	160°
<u>Pork</u>	
Ham	160°
<u>Poultry</u>	
Chicken	180°
Turkey	165°
<u>Eggs</u>	
Casseroles	160°
Sauces, custards	160°

Partygoers and guests – what to avoid.

Be cautious when eating certain foods, such as raw oysters, egg drinks, mousse or bread pudding (unless made with pasteurized eggs or an egg substitute); soft-boiled eggs; steak tartare; and rare or medium hamburger. These foods can harbor bacteria that cause food poisoning. It is particularly important that young children, the elderly, pregnant women and those who are ill or whose immune systems are compromised not eat raw or undercooked animal products or raw oysters unless they have consulted a physician.

If you or a family member develops nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever or abdominal cramps, you could have food poisoning. Symptoms of foodborne illnesses can appear anywhere from 30 minutes to two weeks after eating contaminated food. Most often, people get sick within four to 48 hours after eating contaminated food.

Some foodborne illnesses will resolve themselves without treatment. However, if the symptoms are severe or if the person is very young, old, pregnant or already ill, call a doctor or go to a nearby hospital immediately. If groups of people from different households become sick with vomiting and diarrhea, contact the local health department.

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