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Thanksgiving Safety Tips

Food safety starts from the purchase to the preparation, cooking and serving of the turkey and other traditional dishes. Here are some helpful tips to keep your Thanksgiving Day dinner safe, so you can enjoy the company of your family and guests. Foodborne illnesses are caused when we consume food contaminated with certain bacteria or parasites. The risk of food poisoning, though, can be reduced through proper cleaning, separating, cooking, and chilling of foods.



Don't Invite Bacteria to Dinner

- ◆ Using soap and warm water, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, using the bathroom or touching pets.
- ◆ Keep the kitchen off-limits to young children and adults that are not helping with food preparations to lessen the possibility of kitchen mishaps.
- ◆ Wash cutting boards, counters, and utensils often. Use two cutting boards, one for washed produce and one for raw meat and seafood.
- ◆ Wash fresh vegetables and fruits in drinkable running water.
- ◆ Separate raw foods from cooked foods, to avoid cross-contamination.
- ◆ Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven.
- ◆ Cook foods to at least the internal temperature that kills harmful bacteria. For example, whole poultry should be at least 85° C (185° F).
- ◆ Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- ◆ Cook on the back burners when possible and turn pot handles in so they don't extend over the edge of the stove.
- ◆ Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove or have someone else watch what is being cooked.

To avoid kitchen fires

Holiday fires can turn a joyous occasion into tragedy. Each year more than 4,000 fires occur on Thanksgiving Day. Many if not most are home cooking fires. Follow the guidelines below to avoid a fire this holiday season.

- ◆ Keep potholders and food wrappers at least three feet away from heat sources while cooking
- ◆ When cooking, do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry. The clothing can catch on fire and the jewelry can catch on pot handles, causing spills and burns.
- ◆ Make sure all stoves, ovens, and ranges have been turned off when you leave the kitchen
 - ◆ Set timers to keep track of turkeys and other food items that require extended cooking times
 - ◆ Turn handles of pots and pans on the stove inward to avoid accidents
 - ◆ After guests leave, designate a responsible adult to walk around the home making sure that all candles and smoking materials are extinguished
 - ◆ Keep Thanksgiving decorations and kitchen clutter away from sources of direct heat.
 - ◆ Move away from the stove anything that could catch on fire, such as paper towels, potholders and curtains
 - ◆ Establish a safe zone around the stove while cooking - no children or pets within three feet

Just because we get to take a break from dieting on Thanksgiving, doesn't mean we can throw caution to the autumn winds. Remember these suggestions and have a happy and safe holiday.

