



# Press Release

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## **HEALTH DEPARTMENT WARNS NOT TO INVITE FOODBORNE ILLNESSES TO YOUR HOLIDAYS**

The holidays are, traditionally, a time for friends and family to gather and share a meal. It is important to remember food safety during the holidays in order to prevent foodborne illness. Most people don't think about food safety until they, or someone they know, get sick after eating contaminated food. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that roughly 1 in 6 Americans (48 million people) get sick, 128,000 are hospitalized, and 3,000 die of foodborne diseases each year.

The CDC recommends the following steps to help keep your food safe:

- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water before, during, and after preparing food.
- Thoroughly clean food-preparation surfaces often and especially between uses for preparation of raw, potentially hazardous foods and foods that are ready to eat.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly under running water.
- Thaw your frozen turkey or other meat properly. Frozen foods are the safest when thawed in the refrigerator, but on short notice, can also be thawed in the sink under cold running water.

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- Cook food to its proper internal temperature. Use an accurate food thermometer by inserting it into the thickest portion of the food item to properly check.
- If preparing a turkey, it is safest to cook the stuffing separate from, and not inside, the turkey as the stuffing can act as an insulator which can prevent the turkey from reaching the proper temperature.
- Keep foods out of the “Danger Zone.” Cold foods should be held at 41°F or below while hot foods should be held at 135°F or above. Refrigerate or freeze any perishable food within 2 hours after serving.
- To prevent cross-contamination in refrigeration, store raw, potentially-hazardous foods, such as meat and eggs, separate from or below food that is ready-to-eat.

For more information, contact LCDPH at 217-735-2317 or log onto their website at [WWW.LCDPH.ORG](http://WWW.LCDPH.ORG).

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