

Cooking for Crowds

Why are we concerned about cooking for large groups of people?

Millions of people get sick from foodborne illnesses every year. Food safety can be very challenging during the holidays when you are more likely to cook for large groups of people.

How can I make sure the food I prepare and serve is safe?

- **Thaw foods safely** - Thaw in the refrigerator, under cold running water, or in the microwave. If you thaw food in the microwave, continue cooking immediately.
- **Keep everything clean during preparation** - Wash hands with warm, soapy water before preparation, after handling raw meat or eggs, sneezing/coughing, using the bathroom, changing diapers, or handling pets. Clean preparation surfaces with hot, soapy water. Use separate utensils and plates when handling and preparing raw meat or eggs.
- **Cook meats thoroughly** - Use a meat thermometer to ensure poultry and any stuffed or ground meat is cooked to 165⁰F. Cook red meats and pork to at least 145⁰F. Never partially cook raw meats to warm later.
- **Serve it safely** - Always serve food with clean utensils. Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours. Keep cold foods cold (keep on ice) and hot foods hot (use warming trays or a crockpot) when serving.
- **Store foods safely** - Refrigerate all leftovers to 41⁰F within six hours after serving. Eat leftovers within three days or freeze if you want to store longer.



For more information: www.foodsafety.gov



11/14

Health  Whys

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