Holiday Food Safety Tips

Why are we concerned about food safety around the holidays?



Holiday meals often involve preparing large quantities of food for groups of people, increasing the opportunity for foodborne illness. Some foods, like raw meat and eggs, carry germs that can make people sick if they are not properly prepared and cooked. Proper food handling helps keep family and guests healthy during the festive season.

How can I safely prepare food for the holidays?

- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds before, during, and after preparing food.
- Thaw frozen turkeys safely in the refrigerator or under running cold water. Never thaw at room temperature.
- Keep raw meat, seafood, and eggs separate from ready-to-eat food.
- Keep cold foods at 41°F or below, and hot foods at 135°F or above. Use a food thermometer to verify food stays in those ranges.
- Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.
- Use refrigerated leftovers within 3 to 4 days, or freeze them for longer storage.
- Reheat leftovers to 165°F before eating.
- Don't wash raw turkey and other meats. The contaminated water droplets can splash onto other foods and kitchen surfaces.

For more information, visit: www.vdh.virginia.gov/blue-ridge/environmental-health/

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