



FOOD SAFETY FACT SHEET: HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY TIPS

New Jersey Department of Health
Food and Drug Safety Program

(609)82604935 <http://nj.gov/health/foodanddrugsafety/index.shtml>

Holidays are a time for celebration! When you're entertaining friends and family and cooking up a storm, it's easy to forget food safety. However, harmful foodborne bacteria can put a damper on your party by making you, your family, or your guests very ill. The safe cooking temperatures chart below will help you keep dangerous bacteria from becoming unwanted guests!

IS IT DONE YET?

Measure internal temperatures with a food thermometer inserted into the thickest part of food (as shown here). Looking is not a reliable way to know if food is cooked enough. Check the chart below to learn about safe internal cooking temperatures.



FOOD	SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURE
Fish, meat, pork	145°F (63°C)
Ground meat	155°F (68°C)
Chicken, turkey, stuffed meat	165°F (165°C)

Additional food safety tips:

- Wash hands for 20 seconds with warm, soapy water before handling food and after touching raw meat, poultry, or fish
- Defrost food in the refrigerator, microwave, or under running water - never defrost on counter
- Keep raw meat/poultry away from other foods

LEFTOVER LESSONS

Question:

How do I safely store leftover turkey? Stuffing? Casseroles?

Answer:



Keep those leftovers safe with these simple tips:

- Place leftover turkey, roasts, stuffing, sauces, and casseroles in refrigerator immediately after the meal and before dessert
- Before placing in refrigerator, divide large amounts of food into smaller containers less than 4" in depth
- Discard any cooked or refrigerated food that has been at room temperature for more than 4 hours
- Leave space for air to circulate in your refrigerator so that food can properly cool
- Monitor the temperature of your refrigerator to ensure that it stays below 41°F
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil when reheating
- Heat other leftovers thoroughly to 165°F
- Discard any leftovers that were left out too long or were not cooled properly



THE BOUNTIFUL BUFFET

Everyone loves a sumptuous holiday buffet! Keep buffet foods safe by ensuring that hot foods stay hot, and cold foods stay cold. When possible, use sternos, chafing dishes, or crock pots to keep hot foods at or above 135°F. Ice is a good way to make sure that the temperature of cold foods remains at or below 41°F.

ON THE ROAD...

Bringing food to a potluck or office party? Cooking at Grandma's? Even if it's a short trip, unexpected holiday traffic can cause food to stay out at room temperature for too long. When you are transporting food, take steps to:

- Maintain proper temperatures
- Protect food from contamination

Pack cold foods in a cooler with ice or freezer packs, and do not open the cooler until you have reached your destination. Hot foods should be placed into a crock pot or an oven-safe dish. Reheat to 165°F when you arrive. If you bring raw meat and poultry to cook at another location, make sure to keep them away from any other foods, as juices may cause cross-contamination. If possible, pack in a separate cooler for transporting.

CIDER AND EGG NOG

Nothing beats fresh apple cider or eggnog sprinkled with a little nutmeg during the holidays! These traditional drinks add a festive touch to your party, but they can also be a food safety risk.

Cider

A nasty bacteria called *E. coli* can grow in cider that is unpasteurized. *E. coli*, also found in foods like undercooked burgers, is especially dangerous to kids. Check the label to make sure that you are buying pasteurized cider only.

Eggnog

Homemade eggnog can harbor another dangerous bacteria called *Salmonella*. This bacteria can make people very ill, especially senior citizens or those with a serious illness. Always buy eggnog from the supermarket to ensure that it is pasteurized.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

To download this Fact Sheet or to find more about food safety, please visit our newly updated website at: <http://nj.gov/health/foodanddrugsafety/index.shtml>. For further questions, please contact the Food and Drug Safety Program at (609)826-4935.