



Holiday Food Safety Tips



Food during the holiday season plays a major role. By keeping food safety in mind, you can help reduce the risk of a foodborne illness.

What is Foodborne illness? An infection or irritation of the gastrointestinal (GI) tract caused by food or beverages that contain harmful bacteria, parasites, viruses, or chemicals.

What are the common symptoms? Vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, and chills. Most symptoms will go away after a few hours or days without medical treatment.

By practicing four FDA basic food safety measures you can help prevent a foodborne illness.

1. Clean: Keep everything clean

- i. Wash your hands before and after handling any food
- ii. Wash any surfaces that came in contact with the food after preparing it
- iii. Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly with cool water and remove any surface dirt
- iv. Do not rinse raw meat and poultry before cooking (Bacteria is more likely to spread to areas around the sink and countertops by washing these items)

2. Separate: Avoid cross-contamination between food items

- i. Keep raw eggs, meat and poultry away from foods that will not be cooked
- ii. Use separate utensils and cutting boards for items that will be cooked (meats and poultry) and for items that will not be cooked (vegetables and fruits)
- iii. Place cooked meat and other food that is ready to eat on clean serving dishes that have not contained raw eggs, meat, poultry or their juices

3. Cook: Cook foods long enough to reach a high enough internal temperature to kill harmful bacteria

- i. Use a food thermometer to make sure food is at a safe internal temperature
- ii. Sauces, soups, and gravies should come to a rolling boil when reheated
- iii. Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. If a recipe calls for raw eggs, use pasteurized shell eggs, liquid or frozen pasteurized egg products, or powdered egg whites.
- iv. Do not eat uncooked cookie dough, it may contain raw eggs

4. Chill: Refrigerate foods quickly to avoid bacteria growth

- i. Refrigerate foods within two hours
- ii. Keep your refrigerator at or below 40°F and your freezer at 0°F
- iii. Do not defrost foods at room temperature and allow the correct amount of time for the items to properly thaw.

For more information call the Georgia Poison Center 1-800-222-1222

You can also visit us at www.georgiapoisoncenter.org or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.