



NEWS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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(11/3/25) Preventing Foodborne Illness this Holiday Season

There are few things more satisfying during the holidays than a well-cooked meal. But a wrong turn in preparation could mean a dinner followed by a foodborne illness. Symptoms of food poisoning can be anywhere from mild to very serious and can include upset stomach, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. To prevent a foodborne outbreak from spoiling your holiday traditions, Southern 7 Health Department offers these basic tips.

Keep meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods at the grocery store and in the refrigerator. Prevent juices from meat, chicken, turkey, and seafood from dripping or leaking onto other foods by keeping them in containers or sealed plastic bags. And store eggs in their original carton in the main compartment of the refrigerator.

Use a food thermometer to make sure meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, and eggs have been cooked to a safe internal temperature to kill germs. Roasts, chops, steaks, and fresh ham should rest for 3 minutes after you remove them from the oven or grill.

Keep food out of the “danger zone.” Bacteria can grow rapidly between 40°F and 140°F. After food is prepared, keep hot food hot and cold food cold. Refrigerate or freeze perishable food like meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, eggs, cut fruit, cooked rice, and leftovers within 2 hours (1 hour if food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F, such as in a hot car). The temperature in your refrigerator should be set at 40°F or below and the freezer at 0°F or below.

Use pasteurized eggs for dishes containing raw eggs. Salmonella and other harmful germs can live on both the outside and inside of normal-looking eggs. Many holiday favorites contain raw eggs, including eggnog, tiramisu, hollandaise sauce, and Caesar dressing. Always use pasteurized eggs when making these and other foods made with raw eggs.

Do not eat raw dough or batter. Dough and batter made with flour or eggs can contain harmful germs, such as E. coli and Salmonella. Do not taste or eat raw dough or batter that is meant to be baked or cooked. This includes dough or batter for cookies, cakes, pies, biscuits, pancakes, tortillas, pizza, or crafts. Read the label carefully to make sure the dough is meant to be eaten without baking or cooking.

Prepare your turkey and other foods safely. A turkey must thaw at a safe temperature to prevent harmful germs from growing rapidly. Thaw your turkey in the refrigerator, in a sink of cold water (change the water every 30 minutes), or in the microwave. Always wash your hands after touching other items to prevent germ spread.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov, call Southern 7 Health Department at 618-634-2297, or download the Southern 7 app.

Southern 7 Health Department is a public health department that serves communities of the seven southernmost counties in Illinois focusing on disease prevention, promoting healthy lifestyles, ensuring access to healthcare services, and serves as the Head Start Grantee for the region.

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