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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN BAY ENCOURAGES PROPER FOOD SAFETY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

Prevent illness by implementing good food handling and storage practices



Contact:

Heather Kretzer
Heather.Kretzer@flhealth.gov
850-252-9670

Panama City, Fla. — With the holiday season fast approaching, the Florida Department of Health is encouraging Floridians to keep food safe by practicing basic food safety measures while preparing meals this Thanksgiving.

Many of the reported cases of foodborne illness are caused by bacteria or by the toxins produced by bacteria. Bacteria multiply extremely fast when food is kept at an unsafe temperature (above 41 and below 140 degrees Fahrenheit).

The department recommends the following for reducing the chances of food contamination.

- **Clean.** Wash hands, utensils and surfaces before and after food preparation, especially after preparing meat, poultry, eggs or seafood. Be sure to keep all countertops and work areas clean with hot, soapy water;
- **Cook to Proper Temperature.** Read the cooking directions on packaging before preparing. The safest thawing method is in the refrigerator at 40 degrees. Make sure the food is cooked at the proper internal temperature and check for doneness with a food thermometer;
- **Chill – Refrigerate Properly.** Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours. Make sure the refrigerator is set at no higher than 40 degrees and the freezer is set at 0 degrees; and
- **Separate – Don't cross contaminate.** Keep raw meats, poultry, eggs and seafood and their juices away from ready to eat food. It is recommended that leftovers be heated to 165 degrees.

For more information on how to keep your family safe from foodborne-illness this holiday season, visit <http://www.foodsafety.gov/>.

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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