



Knox County Health Department

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KCHD offers food safety tips ahead of the holidays

Knox County, Tenn. – With Thanksgiving next week, families are preparing to gather for one of the most anticipated meals of the year. The Knox County Health Department has some safe food handling tips to keep everyone happy and healthy this holiday season.

1. Cleaning

Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before and after handling food. Clean countertops, cutting boards, and utensils regularly to prevent cross contamination.

Do NOT place raw meat or poultry under running water. Washing raw meat and poultry can cause bacteria to spread up to three feet away.

2. Separate

Keep raw meat, seafood and eggs away from the ready-to-eat foods that will not be cooked before being eaten. This includes keeping these items separate when storing items in your home refrigerator and while preparing meals.

3. Cooking

Thaw frozen turkeys safely in the refrigerator several days prior to cooking. Never thaw foods on the counter because bacteria quickly multiplies in the parts of the food that reach room temperature. When cooking, use a thin tipped, metal stemmed thermometer in the thickest portions of the meat to ensure you have reached an internal temperature of 165°F. Color is not a reliable indicator of whether food is properly cooked.

Don't be a source of foodborne illness. If you are not feeling well, do not prepare food for your friends or loved ones.

4. Store safely

5. Make sure to refrigerate the leftovers within two hours after cooking. Leftovers are safe in the fridge for up to four days or in the freezer for up to several months.

6. Reheating:

7. Whether reheating food in the microwave or oven, all items should be reheated to an internal temperature of 165°F. Don't taste food that looks or smells questionable. When in doubt, throw it out!

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