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## DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN LAKE ENCOURAGES PROPER FOOD SAFETY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

*Prevent illness by implementing good food handling and storage practices*



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**Eustis, FL** - As you gather around the table with family and friends to share a meal and celebrate the holidays, the Florida Department of Health in Lake County reminds you to practice food safety to ensure a safe and healthy holiday season for everyone.

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).

"This holiday season we want to remind everyone to pay special attention to the handling and preparation of foods" said Aaron Kissler, Health Officer with the Florida Department of Health in Lake County. "Practice food safety to keep your holiday gathering free of foodborne illness"

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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