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FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH IN LAKE COUNTY ENCOURAGES FOOD SAFETY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON TO PREVENT FOODBORNE ILLNESSES



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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. Foodborne illnesses affect one in six people each year in the United States, but it is easily preventable.

“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 in order to keep your holiday gathering free of foodborne illness”

The department recommends following these key steps to prevent foodborne illness during the holidays and year-round.

- Do not prepare food for others if you have diarrhea or vomiting;
- Keep your refrigerator below 40°F and refrigerate perishable items;
- When transporting food to another location, keep it cold to minimize bacterial growth;
- Pack food directly from the refrigerator into the cooler immediately before leaving home;
- Make sure your cooking area is clean: wash hands, cutting boards, utensils and countertops often;
- Wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food;
- Separate raw meats from other foods;
- Use a food thermometer to ensure that foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature;
- After everyone has enjoyed the meal, divide all remaining leftovers into smaller portions and store in shallow containers in the refrigerator within two hours of the meal;
- Perishable food items that have been left out of the refrigerator for longer than two hours should be discarded; and
- Reheat holiday leftovers to 165°F and allow dishes to sit for a few minutes afterwards so the heat can kill any bacteria.

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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