



## HEALTH NEWS FROM DR. YU

Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department

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### Holiday Food Safety

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Here come the holidays! Whether you are hosting a sit-down meal, a buffet, a gathering with tasty appetizers, or contributing to a potluck, there are important tips to ensure the food you serve is both delicious and safe. Carefully following the steps of clean, separate, cook, serve, and chill will help protect your family and guests from food poisoning.

**Clean** your hands by washing them for 20 seconds with soap and running water before handling food and thoroughly in between tasks. Wash cutting boards, dishes, utensils, and counter tops with hot, soapy water right away, before going on to the next task. Once you have used a towel to wipe up a food spill, you should not reuse it for any other purpose—put it in the laundry. Wash fruits and vegetables even if you plan to peel them.

**Separate** raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs from produce or cooked and ready-to-eat foods. Use separate cutting boards, utensils, and plates for raw and cooked food. Make sure you do not mix up your preparation equipment, such as using the same spoon to stir the pie filling and another dish. Store raw foods, like meats, below fresh foods, such as fruits and vegetables, in your refrigerator. These steps help prevent cross-contamination which is when the bacteria from one food product is spread to other foods.

**Cook** food thoroughly by using a food thermometer to check those temperatures.

- Poultry to 165° F throughout.
- Beef, lamb, pork and other whole meats to at least 145° F.
- Ground beef, lamb, pork, or other ground meats to 160° F.
- Stuffing and casseroles to 165° F.
- Reheat foods such as fully cooked hams or yummy leftovers to at least 165° F.

**Serve** hot foods at temperatures above 140° F by using chafing dishes, slow cookers, or warming trays. Keep all cold foods at temperatures below 41° F by nesting dishes in bowls of ice, with the ice up to the same level as the food. Arrange and serve food on several small platters rather than on one large platter. Keep the rest of the food hot in the oven (set at 200-250°F) or cold in the refrigerator until serving time. REPLACE empty platters rather than adding fresh food to a dish that already had food in it. Many people's hands may have been taking food from the dish, which has also been sitting out at room temperature. Discard food that has been at room temperature for more than two hours.

**Chill** food rapidly to 41°F or below by placing in shallow, uncovered containers. Food should get out of the danger zone (41°F-140° F) in less than two hours. Move perishable food into the refrigerator or freezer within this time. Use your food thermometer to be sure your refrigerator temperature stays below 41°F. Allow enough room in the fridge for cold air to circulate.

- Follow these basic steps to keep the celebrations festive and free from food poisoning. For more information visit [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov)

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