

CONTAGIOUS COMMENTS

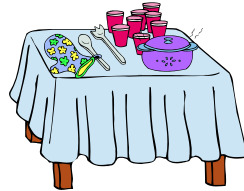
Department of Epidemiology

Don't Test Your Luck at Holiday Potlucks!

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As we move into the holiday season, the Department of Epidemiology would like to remind everyone about safe food handling practices over the holidays. Following these tips will help to keep you and your fellow potluck attendees safe from foodborne illnesses. For more information visit

<http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/events/holidays/index.html>



Tip 1: Wash Your Hands

Always wash your hands before and after handling food. Make sure that your cooking/preparation area is clean and always use clean surfaces to cut on. You should never cut raw meats or poultry on wooden cutting boards. It is very hard to clean the bacteria from these types of cutting boards and may lead to cross contamination when you use them for another food item.

Tip 2: Don't Eat the Cookie Dough and Watch Out for Egg Nog

FDA advises consumers not to eat uncooked cookie dough, homemade or commercial, or batters made with raw fresh eggs because raw fresh eggs may contain bacteria that can cause an intestinal infection called salmonellosis. Thorough cooking kills the bacteria that cause the infection. If you are closet cookie dough eater, we suggest a liquid pasteurized egg product as a replacement for regular eggs.

Traditional egg nog made with raw eggs also presents the same risk to consumers - salmonellosis. While cooking can destroy the disease-causing bacteria, consumers can still become ill when the egg nog is left at room temperature for several hours before being consumed. Safe alternatives are pasteurized egg nog beverages sold in grocery dairy cases; these products should be kept refrigerated.

Tip 3: Cook Thoroughly

If you are cooking foods ahead of time for your party, be sure to cook foods thoroughly to a safe minimum internal temperature (measured with a food thermometer).

- Cook all raw beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, chops and roasts to a minimum internal temperature of 145°F.
- Cook all raw ground beef, pork, lamb, and veal to an internal temperature of 160°F.
- Cook all poultry to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.

After you remove meat from a grill, oven, or other heat source, allow it to rest for the specified amount of time. During the rest time, its temperature remains constant or continues to rise, which destroys harmful germs, holds in tasty juices and makes it easier to slice. See the table on the next page for cooking temperatures and rest recommendations.

During the potluck, keep hot foods HOT and cold foods COLD! Hot foods should be held at 140°F or warmer. On the buffet table you can keep these foods hot with the help of chafing dishes, slow cookers, and warming trays. Cold foods should be held at 40°F or colder. Keep foods cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice. You can also minimize the amount of food that is sitting out on tables by using smaller serving trays and replacing them.

Tip 4: The Two - Hour Rule

Not to be confused with the 2 second rule, foods should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours. Keep track of how long foods have been on the table and discard anything that has been there two hours or more.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.fightbac.org/>
<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/safefood/newsltr/v14n1s08.html>

Recommended cooking times for various foods (http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/mintemp.html)			
Category	Food	Temperature (°F)	Rest Time
Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures	Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160	None
	Turkey, Chicken	165	None
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb	Steaks, roasts, chops	145	3 minutes
Poultry	Chicken & Turkey, whole	165	None
	Poultry breasts, roasts	165	None
	Poultry thighs, legs, wings	165	None
	Duck & Goose	165	None
	Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165	None
Pork and Ham	Fresh pork	145	3 minutes
	Fresh ham (raw)	145	3 minutes
	Precooked ham (to reheat)	140	None
Eggs & Egg Dishes	Eggs	Cook until yolk and white are firm	None
	Egg dishes	160	None
Leftovers & Casseroles	Leftovers	165	None
	Casseroles	165	None
Seafood	Fin Fish	145 or cook until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork.	None
	Shrimp, lobster, and crabs	Cook until flesh is pearly and opaque.	None
	Clams, oysters, and mussels	Cook until shells open during cooking.	None
	Scallops	Cook until flesh is milky white or opaque and firm.	None



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Thank you for your interest in our publication.

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