

## Keeping Your Healthy Feasts Safe

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When you make preparations for Thanksgiving and other holiday meals, you probably call on traditional wisdom passed along to you by your mother. Among all of the family food secrets and recipes, however, you're unlikely to find helpful advice regarding food safety.

People can and do get [foodborne illness](#) from holiday meals. Diarrhea, vomiting and [flu-like symptoms](#) can be mistakenly labeled or go unnoticed.

On the other hand, foodborne illness can be severe and even life threatening. Those individuals most at risk include older adults, infants and small children, pregnant women and individuals that have weakened immunity from cancer, HIV/AIDS, organ transplantation or some arthritis medications.

There is no reason to take chances, particularly when safe food handling practices are so easy to follow. According to the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#), the basics can be summed up as: 1) clean, 2) separate, 3) cook and 4) chill.

**CLEAN** – Your hands and every surface in your kitchen that comes in contact with food should be cleaned

- [Wash hands](#) with soap for 20 seconds before handling food
- Utensil, cutting boards and counter tops should be clean
- Rinse fruits and vegetables under cool water

**SEPARATE** – Avoid cross contamination

- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separate
- Have separate cutting boards for each food groups
- Wash utensils thoroughly after cutting meats

**COOK** – Harmful bacteria is removed by cooking food to a high enough internal temperature

- For turkey, put thermometer into innermost part of thigh
- Soups, sauces and gravies, bring to boiling temperature
- Don't eat uncooked cookie or cake dough that contains raw eggs

**CHILL** – Refrigerate leftovers within two hours after meal

- Proper chilling is under 40 degrees Fahrenheit
- Turkey should be thawed allowing 24 hours for each four to five pounds
- Allow three to four hours of cooking for a 12 to 16 pound turkey

