

Holiday Entertaining

Food Safety Tips

(NAPSA)—Whether serving turkey and cranberries or finger foods and eggnog, passing around holiday cheer at festive gatherings can seem effortless. Unfortunately, without the proper handling of these favorite holiday delights, passing foodborne illnesses can be just as easy.

“Holiday get-togethers almost always include food,” said Dagmar Farr, group vice president, Consumer & Legislative Affairs, Food Marketing Institute. “That’s why it’s so important for hosts to be sure the spread is safe to eat by remembering these four words: Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill.”

Wal-Mart and the Partnership for Food Safety Education’s Fight BAC!® campaign recommend the following tips:

Clean

- Always wash hands with soapy warm water. For best results, rub hands together for 20 seconds before rinsing thoroughly.

- After preparing raw foods on a cutting board, wash with hot soapy water, run through the dishwasher or use a solution of 1 tsp. bleach and 1 quart water to sanitize board. Rinse well after sanitizing.

- Use paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. Or, if using cloth towels, wash often in a hot cycle of the washing machine.

Separate

- Place raw foods in sealed containers to prevent cross-contamination with other foods or kitchen surfaces.

- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so juices don’t drip onto other foods.

- If possible, use two cutting boards, one for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood.

- Never place cooked food back onto the plate or cutting board that previously held raw food.

Cook

- Defrost food in the refrigerator, in the microwave or in cold



water. Cook food thawed in the microwave or in cold water immediately after defrosting.

- Avoid eating foods that include raw or partially cooked eggs, unless eggs are pasteurized. When making eggnog, be sure to only use pasteurized eggs.

- Whole poultry should be cooked until it reaches an internal temperature of 180 degrees F on a food thermometer. Never eat rare or undercooked poultry.

- Ground meat should be cooked thoroughly to 160 degrees F on a food thermometer, while roasts and steaks should be cooked to at least 145 degrees F, and fish should be cooked until it is opaque or white and flakes easily with a fork.

Chill

- Place hot foods in chafing dishes, crock pots and warming trays to keep at 140 degrees F or warmer, and keep cold foods at 40 degrees F or cooler by placing in bowls of ice.

- The refrigerator should be set at or below 40 degrees F and the freezer should be set at or below 0 degrees F. Occasionally check these temperatures with an appliance thermometer.

- With poultry and other stuffed meats, remove the stuffing and refrigerate in a separate container.

For more information on practicing safe food handling, visit www.fightbac.org or www.walmartstores.com, click on Tip Sheet and Fight Bac!®