

SAFETY SPOTLIGHT

FOOD SAFETY- HOW TO AVOID FOOD POISONING

The end of the year is a great time for potlucks, barbeques, and other gatherings that include food. But where there is food, there exists the potential for food-borne illnesses. Keep in mind that contaminated food can make you sick even if it still looks, smells, and tastes fine.

- ❖ Food safety starts before the party. Follow proper sanitation procedures when preparing food. Wash your hands thoroughly before handling any food product or the utensils and containers with which food will come into contact. While preparing the food, do not cross contaminate ingredients (for instance, putting cooked meat back on the platter that was holding the raw meat). Transport cold and hot foods in a way that keeps them at a safe temperature (at least 140° F for hot foods and no more than 40° F for cold foods). Thoroughly wash raw fruits and vegetables.
- ❖ Thoroughly cook food, especially meat. Undercooked food can harbor bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can make you sick. The following minimum internal temperatures should be reached for food safety:
 - Poultry: 165° F
 - Ground beef: 155° F
 - Pork: 150° F
 - Beef, lamb, fish, and seafood: 140° F
- ❖ Avoid cross contamination. Use separate platters and utensils for uncooked and cooked foods, especially meat. Use separate serving utensils for each food dish.
- ❖ Keep food at the appropriate temperature. Hot foods should be kept hot (140° F) and cold foods should be kept cold (40° F). Neither should not be allowed to remain at room temperature for more than 2 hours or between 90 and 140 degrees F for more than an hour.



- ❖ Some foods are more likely to grow germs than others. These include meat, fish, poultry, milk and milk-based products, egg and mayonnaise-based foods, refried beans, cooked rice, and baked potatoes. Extra care should be taken with these foods.
- ❖ Keep food covered when it is not being served. This will prevent insects and other foreign objects from contaminating the food.
- ❖ Each person should thoroughly wash their hands for at least 20 seconds with warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer before touching serving utensils and food.
- ❖ If food has been sitting at an unsafe temperature, or if it has been contaminated, throw it out. If you are unsure, throw it out. Do not save it and reheat it later in an attempt to make it safe; there is a high chance you will become sick.

Helping to keep our member's employees safe! This Safety Spotlight brought to you by: