KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension Wildcat District

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Thankful for Food Safety

The Thanksgiving season has arrived, and holiday meal planning is in full swing. As family and friends come together to enjoy treasured dishes, following a few simple food safety steps can help keep everyone healthy and ensure that the only thing being passed around the table is the food.

Keep it Clean

- Wash your hands! Remember, you are the first line of defense when it comes to keeping yourself and others safe from germs and food-borne illness! There are five simple steps to effectively washing your hands: Wet, Lather, Scrub, Rinse, and Dry. This process should last you at least 20 seconds.
- Ensure that food prep surfaces and utensils are clean and sanitized before the cooking festivities begin. Bacteria found in poultry products can survive on countertops and other kitchen surfaces up to 32 hours, so depending on your cooking timeline, you might need to clean and sanitize your space and utensils more than once.

Meal Prep

- Keep raw meat and poultry separate from produce and cooked food items. Prepare foods that will not be cooked, such as vegetables and salads, before handling and preparing raw meat and poultry.
- Meat and poultry must be cooked to a safe internal temperature in order to kill bacteria. You cannot see, smell, or feel bacteria on meat and poultry, so you should always use a food thermometer.
- Your turkey is safe to eat when the temperature reads 165°F (74°C) in three places:
    - The thickest part of the breast.
    - The innermost part of the thigh.
    - The innermost part of the wing.

Enjoy

- Food left out for over two hours is no longer food safe. To reduce the risk of someone getting sick and food waste, serve small portions of large dishes and store the remainder in a warm oven or the fridge.
- If the food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F (32°C), like a hot car, refrigerate it within 1 hour to reduce your risk of foodborne illness.
- All dishes should be reheated to 165°F (74°C) as measured with a food thermometer. Soups, Sauces, and Gravies can be reheated safely by bringing them to a rolling boil.

For more information, visit www.foodsafety.gov OR contact Katherine Pinto, Nutrition, Food Safety and Health Agent, kdpinto@ksu.edu or 620-724-8233.

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