

Whether you're hosting a festive get-together or just bringing along a dish, prevent kitchen fires and cook safely with these tips in mind:

- Keep flammable items away from the stovetop, including oven mitts, potholders, food packaging and dishtowels. Avoid wearing loose clothing, which could catch fire on burners.
- Do not leave cooking unattended. When using the stovetop, stay in the kitchen so you can keep an eye on the food. If you have something in the oven, check on it frequently; set a timer as a reminder.
- Keep the floor clear of any tripping hazards, such as bags or toys. Pets should be kept in another room where they won't risk getting underfoot.
- Stay alert while cooking on the stove. If you're tired or have consumed alcohol, let someone else take over.
- Exercise caution when handling hot liquids and foods, as steam or splashes can cause serious burns, as well as the trays, pans and serving dishes they are in.
- When it is time to set the table, place hot liquids and foods in the center of the table, where they are less likely to be knocked over.

Food Safety Tips for the Holidays

Eating with family is part of many holiday celebrations. Follow these tips to help prevent food poisoning, or food borne illness, during the holidays.

Keep foods separated. Keep meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods at the grocery store and in the refrigerator. Prevent juices from meat, chicken, turkey, and seafood from dripping or leaking onto other foods by keeping them in containers or sealed plastic bags. Store eggs in their original carton in the main compartment of the refrigerator.

Cook food thoroughly. Use a food thermometer to make sure meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, and eggs have been cooked to a safe internal temperature to kill germs.

Keep food out of the “danger zone.” According to the FDA, germs can grow rapidly in the danger zone between 41°F and 135°F. After food is prepared, keep hot food hot (above 135°F) and cold food cold (below 41°F). Refrigerate or freeze perishable food like meat, chicken, turkey, seafood, eggs, cut fruit, cooked rice, and leftovers within 2 hours (1 hour if food is exposed to temperatures above 90°F, such as in a hot car). The temperature in your refrigerator should be set at 40°F or below and the freezer at 0°F or below.

Use pasteurized eggs for dishes containing raw eggs. *Salmonella* and other harmful germs can live on both the outside and inside of normal-looking eggs. Many holiday favorites contain raw eggs, including eggnog, tiramisu, hollandaise sauce, and salad dressings. Always use pasteurized eggs when making these and other foods made with raw eggs.

Food Safety Tips for the Holidays, continued...

Raw flour and eggs can have germs. Uncooked dough and batter made with flour or eggs can contain harmful germs, such as *E. coli* and *Salmonella*. This includes dough or batter for cookies, cakes, pies, biscuits, pancakes, tortillas, pizza, or crafts. Some companies and stores offer edible cookie dough made with heat-treated flour and pasteurized eggs or no eggs. Read the label carefully to make sure the dough is meant to be eaten without baking or cooking.

Thaw your turkey safely. Thaw frozen turkey in the refrigerator, in a sink of cold water (change the water every 30 minutes), or in the microwave. Do not thaw turkey or other foods on the counter. A turkey must thaw at a safe temperature to prevent harmful germs from growing rapidly.

Wash your hands with soap and water during these key times when you are likely to get and spread germs:

- **Before, during, and after** preparing food
 - **Before** eating food
 - **After** feeding pets
 - **After** using the toilet
- **After** changing diapers or cleaning up a child who has used the toilet
- **After** touching garbage
 - **Before** and **after** caring for someone who is sick
 - **Before** and **after** treating a cut or wound
- **After** blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing