



News Release

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Even the best holiday cooks benefit from food safety tips

Following simple safety tips can prevent food-related illnesses

OLYMPIA — Food takes center stage at many holiday gatherings. However, when food-related illness strikes, holiday joy can turn into stomach pains. Food safety experts at the Washington State Department of Health have safety tips for cooks to make sure that everyone enjoys holiday meals.

Avoidable food safety mistakes can happen in any kitchen, but there are [ways to lower the risk](#) of foodborne illness. The chances of getting sick can easily be reduced by washing your hands often, preventing raw meat and poultry juices from contaminating other foods and surfaces, and cooking meats and poultry to a safe temperature.

Common symptoms of food-related illness include vomiting, diarrhea, stomach cramps, and sometimes a fever. Symptoms can start hours to days after ingesting contaminated food or drinks. For healthy people the symptoms usually last between a few hours and a few days and usually go away without needing medical attention. However, some food-related illnesses can be severe and even life-threatening, especially for older adults, infants and young children, pregnant women, and people with any condition that weakens their immune system.

Every cook has an important role to play in keeping food safe, and with a little bit of extra care, holiday meals can be enjoyed and remembered fondly. [More information on holiday food safety](#) is online, including videos on how to properly thaw and cook a turkey.

The Food Safety program works to minimize foodborne illness by promoting safe practices in retail and food service settings, working in partnership with the food service industry and local, state, and federal agencies.

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