



SAN BENITO COUNTY

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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Healthy People in Healthy Communities

San Benito County Public Health Offers Food Safety Tips for Holiday Feasts

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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With the holiday season fast approaching, San Benito County Public Health reminds consumers about the importance of safe food handling to prevent foodborne illness.

Bacteria such as *Salmonella*, *E. coli*, and others can be present in foods, such as meat and poultry, and can cause illness due to insufficient cooking, inadequate cooling and improper food handling practices. Properly prepared and handled foods can assure us all a safe meal every day of the year.

Foodborne diseases can be prevented by simple safety steps in the kitchen.

- **Wash hands** with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before and after food preparation, and especially after handling raw foods.
- **Clean all work surfaces, utensils and dishes** with hot soapy water and rinse with hot water after each use.
- **Don't Wash the Turkey.** Washing raw meat and poultry can cause bacteria to spread up to three feet away. Cooking (baking, broiling, boiling, frying or grilling) meat and poultry to the right temperature kills any bacteria that may be present, so washing meat and poultry is not necessary.
- **Refrigerate** leftovers quickly (within two hours) at 40°F.

Consumers can find more information about food safety tips on the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH's) website. Bacteria such as *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7 are responsible for many foodborne illnesses, caused by eating contaminated foods.

Contamination usually occurs as a result of poor food handling practices at the farms, factories, restaurants or homes.

Symptoms of foodborne disease may include fever, abdominal cramps, and diarrhea which may be bloody. Most infected people recover from foodborne illnesses within a week. Some, however, may develop complications that require hospitalization. Young children, the elderly, pregnant women, and persons with a weakened immune system are at highest risk for potentially life-threatening complications.

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Additional resources for information on food safety include the Federal Food and Drug Administration Food Information line at 1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). Consumers can also access the national Partnership for Food Safety Education's ["Fight BAC" \(bacteria\) Web page](#) or www.cdpb.ca.gov. For additional information please call (831) 636-4035 or go to our website at <http://hhsa.cosb.us/publichealth>.



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