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Social Services | Public Health | Mental Health

## news release

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### Serve up food safety this holiday season

With the start of the holiday season just around the corner, the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) Public Health is reminding people to keep food safety in mind.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and California Department of Public Health offer these simple tips to help keep you and your friends and family in good health, and free from foodborne illness, over the coming months:

Refrigerate or freeze turkey and other meats and seafood promptly after purchase. Refrigeration temperature should be kept at 41 F or colder.

Keep hands and food contact surfaces clean. Always wash your hands with warm, soapy water before and after handling foods. Thoroughly clean all work surfaces, utensils and dishes with hot, soapy water and rinse with hot water before and after each use.

Wash fruits and vegetables under cool, running water. Even if you plan to peel fruits and veggies, it's important to wash them first because bacteria can spread from the outside to the inside as you cut or peel them.

Avoid cross-contamination. Keep fruits and vegetables away from raw meats, poultry, eggs and fish. Also, keep raw animal products separate from each other. When taste-testing food, ladle a small amount of it into a dish and taste with a clean spoon.

Cook foods to proper temperatures. Set the oven temperature no lower than 325 F and be sure the turkey is completely thawed before cooking. Using a food thermometer, make sure that the internal temperature of the turkey is at least 165 F at the thickest part of the turkey. Cooking times will vary. For optimal safety, cook stuffing outside the turkey in a casserole dish.

Refrigerate leftovers. Turkey, meat and other perishable foods should be refrigerated within two hours after being cooked. Do not eat leftover meat

that has been refrigerated for longer than three to four days or eat leftover stuffing or gravy that has been refrigerated for longer than two days.

"We all enjoy different foods from many different origins during the holiday season," said Melissa Martel, director of DHHS Division of Environmental Health. "Food safety should be of primary consideration throughout the year. This will help ensure that every meal is a safe meal."

For more information about food safety, call the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Safe Food Information Line at 1-888-723-3366 or the U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854. Holiday food safety tips are also available at [foodsafety.gov](http://foodsafety.gov).

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