

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Amber Kolberg
Florence County Health Department
715.528.4837
akolberg@florencecountywi.gov

Food Safety During Your Gathering

Florence, WI –

Foodborne illnesses get millions of people sick each year. Everyone can get sick from eating contaminated food and keep in mind, symptoms vary from person to person even if they ate the same meal. The concentration of pathogens varies in each serving of food and/or water. The most common symptom makes you feel like you have the flu and for some individuals, it can cause serious health problems or even death. People that are at higher risk are pregnant women, older adults, and those with certain health conditions such as cancer, diabetes, and kidney disease.

The Florence County Health Department would like to remind the public to follow these basic steps to make sure you are preparing food safely at home during gatherings and over the upcoming holiday season:

1. **CLEAN:** Always wash your hands, food, counters, and cooking utensils and equipment.
 - Wash your hands in warm soapy water for at least 20 seconds before and after touching food.
 - Rinse fruits and veggies with water. It's not recommended to use soap, bleach solutions, disinfecting products or commercial produce wash.
 - Wash your cutting boards, utensils, and counters with hot soapy water before and after each food item.
 - Clean the lids of canned goods before opening.
2. **SEPARATE:** Keep raw foods separated from other foods during storage and preparation. Germs can spread from one food item to another.
 - Do not reuse marinades used on raw foods unless you bring them to a boil.
 - Use a separate cutting board for raw meats and a separate one for different species of meats.
3. **COOK:** Foods need to get hot and stay hot. Heat kills germs.
 - Cook food to safe temperatures:
 - ✓ Roasts of beef, pork and lamb – 145 °F
 - ✓ Seafood, shellfish, fish, eggs, steaks and chops – 145 °F

- ✓Ground meat, injected and mechanically tenderized meat - 155°F
- ✓Ground beef, pork, lamb, or seafood– 155 °F
- ✓Turkey, chicken, duck and wild game – 165 °F
- ✓Reheating foods- 165 °F

- Use a food thermometer to make sure that food is done. You can't always tell by looking.

4. **CHILL:**

- 2-hour Rule: Put foods in the fridge or freezer within 2 hours of cooking or buying from the store.
- Cold hold food at a temperature of 41°F or below.

5. **THAW:**

- Never thaw food by simply leaving out on the counter.
- Thaw food safely in the fridge, under cold running water, or in the microwave.
- Marinate foods in the fridge.

By following these simple steps, your family and guests will enjoy a delicious and safely prepared meal at your gatherings. For more information, please visit www.datcp.wi.gov. Contact the Florence County Health Department at 715.528.4837 or visit 501 Lake Ave. in Florence, Wisconsin Monday thru Thursday 8:30am to 4:00pm.

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