

Transporting Food

Cold potentially hazardous food must be kept cold (41°F or colder) and hot potentially hazardous food must be kept hot (135° or hotter) to keep illness-causing bacteria from growing.

When traveling with food, or suggesting food for guests to bring, consider the type of food and the distance traveled. People traveling a long distance would best bring the non-perishables such as rolls, chips, breads, and cookies. Those traveling an hour or less would more safely bring perishable food.

Eggnog

Eggnog recipes that use raw eggs without heating may not be safe. Eggs must be cooked thoroughly to kill any bacteria (such as Salmonella) that may be present. To prepare safe eggnog:

- Cook the eggnog mixture to at least 145°F.
- Cool quickly by dividing eggnog into several shallow containers and refrigerate.

Another way to prepare eggnog is to use pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes. Eggnog made this way does not require cooking for food safety.

Commercially-prepared eggnog is made with pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes and does not require cooking (but does need to be refrigerated).

Pies

Pies containing meat, eggs or milk (such as pumpkin, cream and custard pies) need to be stored safely. These pies will support the rapid growth of bacteria if kept at an inadequate temperature. Keep the pies stored in the refrigerator when they are not being served.

There are several companies that make shelf-stable pumpkin pies which can be stored at room temperature. Once the pie has been opened, it must be refrigerated.

What is 'potentially hazardous food'?

Potentially hazardous food (PHF) is food that allows illness-causing bacteria to grow rapidly. PHF is usually high in protein and has moisture. Examples include:

- Animal products like dairy products, meat, fish, shellfish, pork, chicken, and lamb
- Cooked starches like cooked potatoes, rice, pasta and beans
- Cut melons, lettuce and tomatoes-keep them cold once you cut them

To control the growth of bacteria in PHF, we must control the temperatures. PHF should not be in the Danger Zone for more than 2 hours.

What's the "Danger Zone?"

The Danger Zone (41°F-135°F) is the temperature range at which most of the illness-causing bacteria can grow rapidly.

Is it safe to store perishable food outdoors? We do not recommend relying on the weather for refrigeration. The sun's rays, and other variables, can cause warm spots.

For more information:
Benton-Franklin Health District

7102 W. Okanogan Pl.
Kennewick, WA 99336
(509) 460-4205
www.bfhd.wa.gov

Other BFHD brochures:

"Potluck Safety"
"Facts About Salmonella"
"Turkey Safety"
"Food Thermometers"
"Facts About Foodborne Illness"

Other Resources:

Fight Bac images and more helpful information from Partnership for Food Safety Education
www.fightbac.org
www.holidayfoodsafety.org

Holiday Party Food

Seasonal Food Safety Series



Benton-Franklin Health District 04/08

www.bfhd.wa.gov



To celebrate holiday occasions, we welcome guests into our homes and serve them food. Often, the dishes we prepare are new recipes or we cook in amounts larger than we usually make. Unfortunately, uninvited guests like bacteria may show up if foods are improperly prepared and can spread illness, rather than good cheer.

When you look around your holiday table this year, remember this... One of five of the people you see could be at high risk for a foodborne illness.

The people most likely to get sick are:

- ◇ over 65 years old
- ◇ pregnant women
- ◇ young children and babies
- ◇ people with chronic illnesses

Follow some simple food safety tips for your next holiday gathering to make sure your guests remember the good time rather than an unpleasant foodborne illness.

Party Preparation

Start your preparations by washing your hands. Scrub your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds before rinsing with warm water and drying with a paper towel.



Keep your kitchen, dishes, and utensils clean also. It is a good idea to sanitize countertops, cutting boards and other food preparation items prior to use. To prepare a sanitizer to kill bacteria: mix 1 teaspoon bleach per gallon of cool water.



Buffet-Style Food

A common problem with buffet-styled food is holding foods at improper temperatures for more than 2 hours. Time delays are especially common during holiday festivities that last several hours. Improper temperatures can let bacteria double in number every 20 minutes, which can cause foodborne illness. To prevent illness, perishable foods should never be out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours.

To serve cold perishable food safely:

- ✓ Serve food on several small platters rather than on one large platter. Store platters of food in the refrigerator and remove as needed.
- ✓ Replace empty platters rather than adding fresh food to a dish that already had food on it.
- ✓ Keep cold food cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice.
- ✓ Use a metal-stem thermometer to make sure cold food temperatures are 41°F or below.

You may want to serve hot food such as casseroles, soups, or meats at your holiday gathering. Because these items can support bacterial growth, food temperatures need to be controlled.

To serve hot food safely:

- ✓ Keep cooked food hot on the stove, in the oven, or in a crock pot and remove small portions as needed.
- ✓ Keep food in the refrigerator and heat portions as they are needed in the microwave, on the stove, or in the oven.
- ✓ Keep hot food hot with chafing dishes, crock pots and warming trays.
- ✓ Use a metal-stem thermometer to make sure hot food temperatures are 135°F or above.

Finger-Food

To keep guests from spreading their germs through double dipping, follow these tips for serving finger-foods:

- ◇ Provide utensils at each food container for people to use for serving themselves.
- ◇ If you serve dip, have individual plates or bowls for guests to spoon a serving of dip for their personal use.



Leftovers

One of the benefits of a holiday party or meal is having delicious leftovers to enjoy. Remember though, the risk of foodborne illness increases when food is left out too long.

- ✓ When you've just finished eating, the last thing you may want to think about is packing away the leftovers, but refrigeration is an important safety treatment for your meal- hot food should be refrigerated within two hours of cooking to keep bacteria from growing.
- ✓ Keep track of how long perishable food have been sitting out without a heat or cold source and discard anything left out over two hours.
- ✓ Other leftovers, which have been properly kept hot or cold, can be refrigerated or frozen in shallow containers.
- ✓ Leftover turkey will keep in the refrigerator for 3-4 days; stuffing and gravy should be used within 2 days. For longer storage, you can freeze items. Frozen turkey, stuffing and gravy leftovers should be used within 1 month.
- ✓ Reheat leftovers to 165°F.

Did You Know?

The average household sponge potentially has billions of bacteria. Consider replacing the sponge with a clean dish cloth (wash daily) or single-use paper towels.