

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON DON'T INVITE THE FOOD GERMS

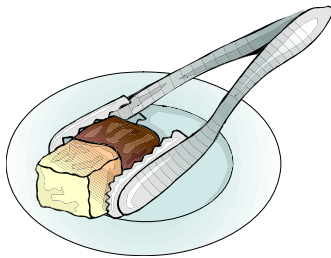
It's the season for celebrating time-honoured traditions with family, friends and co-workers. Food plays a big part and needs to be handled safely so that foodborne illness germs such as E. coli O157:H7 and Salmonella don't become a problem. Here are some ways to keep food safe.

Spruce up the kitchen

- Make room in the refrigerator for holiday food. Discard outdated food, spoiled food, and any suspect food. Don't forget to check food stored on the refrigerator door and in the produce drawers.
- The interior of the refrigerator should be 4°C (40°F) or lower. Check the temperature with an appliance thermometer.
- Stock up on dish cloths, tea towels, serving utensils such as tongs, and serving dishes, so you can change them often. Have at least two cutting boards on hand. Use one cutting board for washed produce and ready to eat food, and use the second board for raw poultry, meat and fish.
- Consider buying a digital instant read thermometer. It's an easy way to check temperatures when cooking meat, poultry, fish and other food.

Take extra care when serving food buffet-style

- On the buffet table, keep food at safe temperatures; below 4°C (40°F) or above 60°C (140°F). Surround cold food with ice and use chafing dishes and warming trays to keep food hot. Covering food will help maintain temperatures.
- Keep an eye on the time. Food should not sit out for more than two hours. Put out small amounts of food and bring more food from the kitchen as needed, on clean dishes.
- Provide serving utensils with each food dish on the buffet, including finger foods.



- To discourage double dipping, include spoons with bowls of dip.
- Add spoons or tongs with bowls of nuts or unwrapped candies.
- Cut larger food items into smaller pieces so that food is easy to pick up with tongs or other serving utensils.

Serving grapes? Cut bunches of washed grapes into small clusters of 2 or 3 grapes so that guests don't have to handle an entire bunch.

- Help younger children at buffets
- Have lots of napkins, clean plates and cutlery available

Make hand washing an ally

Wash your hands with soap and warm water:

- after coming home
- before preparing food or eating
- after handling raw meat, poultry or fish
- after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
- after using the toilet, changing diapers or touching pets
- before eating at restaurants or special events and before enjoying your lunch or food treats at work



If you are sick, stay home and get well

- Have another person make the food for a child's class, for family events, or to share with co-workers. You might also consider buying individually portioned and wrapped food products. There is less risk of spreading germs.

For more information on food safety, click on the links below:

Call Alberta Health Services, Calgary, Environmental Public Health Program at 403-943-2288, or click on the Environmental Public Health website:

<http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/publichealth/envhealth/index.htm>

[Health Canada, It's Your Health, The Basics of Hand Washing](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/hands-mains-eng.php)

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/diseases-maladies/hands-mains-eng.php>

[Health Canada, It's Your Health, Holiday Food Safety](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/holiday-fete-eng.php)

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/holiday-fete-eng.php>

[Canadian Food Inspection Agency \(CFIA\), Food Thermometer Food Safety Tips, Preventing foodborne illness](http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/concen/tipcon/thermoe.shtml) <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/fssa/concen/tipcon/thermoe.shtml>

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