

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON DON'T INVITE THE FOOD BUGS

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 bad bugs such as *E. coli*, *Salmonella* and Norovirus don't become a problem.



Make hand washing an ally. Wash your hands with soap and warm water after coming home, before preparing food or eating, after blowing your nose, touching pets, using the toilet or changing diapers. Wash your hands before eating at restaurants, special events or before enjoying food treats at work.

If you are sick, stay home. Have another person make the food for your child's class, for family events, or to share with co-workers. You might also consider buying individually portioned and wrapped food. There is less risk of spreading food bugs.

When serving food buffet-style, here are some ways to keep food safe:

- When making fruit and vegetable platters, wash fruits and vegetables carefully in running water. Leafy produce such as lettuce and parsley may need several rinses in clean water. Tip: Cut bunches of grapes into small clusters of 2 or 3 grapes so that guests don't have to handle an entire bunch.
- Food should not sit out for more than two hours. Put out small amounts of food. Replace food as needed, on clean plates.
- 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. Where possible, cover buffet food.
- Have a good supply of serving utensils such as tongs, forks and spoons. Include serving spoons when offering bowls of nuts or unwrapped candies.

For more information, go to:

[Environmental Health, Calgary Health Region, Alberta Health Services](#), or call the Environmental Health Program at 403-943-2288.

[Health Canada, It's Your Health, Holiday Food Safety](#)