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Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Follow Four Steps to Food Safety, Even During Holidays

DUPAGE COUNTY—As the holiday season approaches, it's likely there are multiple meals and parties in your future. Carrying food from one location to another and sharing dishes with a crowd means more opportunities for bacteria to grow and cause food poisoning.

The DuPage County Health Department reminds you to follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) four steps to food safety: Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill.

Clean. Wash your hands and surfaces often.

- Germs that cause food poisoning can survive in many places and spread around your kitchen.
- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before, during and after preparing food, and before eating.
- Wash your utensils, cutting boards and countertops with hot, soapy water.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running water.

Separate. Don't cross-contaminate.

- Raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs can spread germs to ready-to-eat foods, unless you keep them separate.
- Use separate cutting boards and plates for raw meat, poultry and seafood.
- When grocery shopping, keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and their juices away from other foods.
- Keep raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs separate from all other foods in the fridge.

Cook. To the right temperature.

- Food is safely cooked when the internal temperature gets high enough to kill germs that can make you sick. The only way to tell if food is safely cooked is to use a food thermometer. You cannot tell if food is safely cooked by checking its color and texture.

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- Use a food thermometer to ensure foods are cooked to a safe internal temperature.
 - 145°F for whole cuts of beef, pork, veal and lamb (then allow the meat to rest for three minutes before carving or eating)
 - 160°F for ground meats, such as beef and pork
 - 165°F for all poultry, including ground chicken and turkey
 - 165°F for leftovers and casseroles
 - 145°F for fresh ham (raw)
 - 145°F for fin fish or cook until flesh is opaque

Chill. Refrigerate promptly.

- Keep your refrigerator below 40°F and know when to throw out food.
- Refrigerate perishable food within two hours. (If outdoor temperature is above 90°F, refrigerate within one hour.)
- Thaw frozen food safely in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave. Never thaw foods on the counter, because bacteria multiply quickly in the parts of the food that reach room temperature.

For more food safety information from the DuPage County Health Department, visit: [Food Safety Tips](#).

For more about food safety from Fight Bac! The Partnership for Food Safety Education, visit: fightbac.org.

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