



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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CDPH Offers Food Safety Tips for the Holidays

SACRAMENTO -- With the holiday season upon us, California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Public Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith today reminded consumers about the importance of safe food handling to prevent foodborne illness.

“Bacterial pathogens like *Salmonella*, *E. coli* and *Campylobacter* can be present in foods, such as meat and poultry, and can cause illness due to insufficient cooking, inadequate cooling and improper food handling practices,” Smith said. “Properly prepared and handled foods can assure us all a safe meal every day of the year.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 48 million illnesses, 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths annually in the United States are related to foodborne diseases.

Foodborne diseases can be prevented by simple safety steps in the kitchen. Wash hands with soap and warm water before and after food preparation, and especially after handling raw foods. Clean all work surfaces, utensils and dishes with hot soapy water and rinse with hot water after each use. Be sure to cook foods thoroughly and to refrigerate adequately between meals. Consumers can find more information about [Food Safety Tips for Holiday Feasts](#) on the CDPH website.

Bacteria such as *Salmonella* and *E. coli* O157:H7 are responsible for many foodborne illnesses, caused by eating contaminated foods. Contamination can occur at the farm level, during processing and handling, and as a result of poor food handling practices at home.

Symptoms of foodborne disease can include diarrhea, which may be bloody, vomiting, abdominal cramps and fever. Most infected people recover from foodborne illnesses within a week. Some, however, may develop complications that require hospitalization. Young children, the elderly, pregnant women and persons with a weakened immune system are at highest risk for potentially life-threatening complications.

Additional resources for information on food safety include the federal Food and Drug Administration Food Information line at 1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854). Consumers can also access the national Partnership for Food Safety Education’s [“Fight BAC” \(bacteria\) Web page](#).

www.cdph.ca.gov

