



FOOD SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAY SEASON

December 17, 2018– With the holidays upon us, it is easy to put aside our health as we focus on celebrating the season with family and friends. Stress, lack of sleep, close quarters, and flu season can make us more vulnerable to illness, increasing the need to avoid the spread of germs.

“One of the most important steps a person can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others is keeping their hands clean,” said Dr. Jennifer Morse, Medical Director for District Health Department #10 (DHD#10). “Adults and children should wash their hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing and before eating.”

Hand washing is simple! Just follow these steps:

- **Wet** your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.
- **Lather** your hands by rubbing them together. Be sure to get the backs of your hands, wrists, between your fingers and under your fingernails.
- **Scrub** your hands for at least 20 seconds. This is about the time it takes to sing "Happy Birthday" twice.
- **Rinse** hands well under running water.
- **Dry** your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. Sharing cloth towels can spread germs. If possible, use a paper towel to turn off the faucet and open the door.

Additionally, it is important to protect yourself and your family from food poisoning by practicing these four simple steps.

1. **Clean:** Wash hands for 20 seconds with plain soap and running water. Wash surfaces and utensils after each use. Wash fruits and veggies but not meat, poultry, or commercial eggs.
2. **Separate:** Use separate cutting boards and plates for produce and meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs. Keep meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods at the grocery store. Keep meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs separate from all other foods in the fridge.
3. **Cook:** Use a food thermometer to ensure food has been heated to a high enough temperature to kill harmful bacteria. Keep food hot after cooking (at 140 F or above) by using a heat source like a chafing dish, warming tray, or slow cooker. When reheating food with a microwave be sure to heat to 165 F.
4. **Chill:** Refrigerate perishable foods within two hours. Never thaw or marinate foods on the counter. Be sure to throw food out before harmful bacteria grow by checking storage times (<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storagetimes.html>).

Common symptoms of food poisoning are upset stomach, stomach cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever. Symptoms, on average, last 24 to 48 hours. Pregnant women, older adults, children, and persons with chronic illnesses are more likely to get sick from contaminated food. If you suspect food poisoning from eating at a food



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service establishment or a large gathering, please call your local health department office at www.dhd10.org/contact-us/ or call 888-217-3904.

For more information on hand washing, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>. For home food safety tips and more information, visit www.foodsafety.gov.

About DHD #10

District Health Department #10 (DHD #10) is Michigan's largest geographical health department, mandated to promote and protect the public from unsafe and hazardous conditions and provide methods of promoting good health and disease prevention. Some of the vital programs provided by DHD #10 include Immunizations, Infectious Disease Control, STI Testing and Counseling, WIC, Maternal Infant Health Program, Healthy Families Northern Michigan, Children's Special Health Services, Hearing and Vision Screening, Family Planning, Cancer Screening, Worksite Wellness, Smoking Cessation, Substance Use Prevention, Chronic Disease Prevention, and Environmental Health Services. DHD #10 serves Crawford, Kalkaska, Lake, Manistee, Mason, Mecosta, Missaukee, Newaygo, Oceana, and Wexford counties. For more information, visit www.dhd10.org.

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