

*County of Moore*  
*Department of Health*  
705 Pinehurst Avenue • P.O. Box 279  
Carthage, North Carolina 28327

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Holiday Food Safety Tips**

Whether you're preparing your annual holiday feast or bringing your favorite dish to a holiday celebration, it's always important to practice safe food handling procedures. Each year, millions of Americans get sick with foodborne illnesses. The Moore County Health Department encourages everyone to remember the initials CSCC as the keys to safe food handling: clean, separate, cook, and chill. Consistently following these simple steps can help reduce the risk of illness to you and your family.

**Clean**

Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen and get on hands, cutting boards, knives and countertops. Frequent cleaning can keep that from happening. Always wash hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Rinse fruits and vegetables under running tap water just before eating. Rub firm skin produce (or scrub with clean brush) under running tap water.

**Separate**

Cross contamination is how bacteria can spread. Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator and separate from ready to eat food. Clean and sanitize countertops, cutting boards and knives between uses.

*"To Protect and Promote Health through Prevention and Control of Disease and Injury."*  
<http://www.moorecountync.gov/health/>

Environmental Health  
Telephone: 910-947-6283  
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Telephone: 910-947-2797  
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**Cook**

Improper heating and preparation of food means bacteria can survive. You can't tell food is cooked safely just by how it looks. Using a food thermometer is the only reliable way to ensure safety and to determine desired "doneness" of meat, poultry and egg products. Cooking these foods to a safe minimum internal temperature as measured with a food thermometer will destroy any harmful microorganisms. Turkey, chicken, and foods containing these meats must cook to an internal temperature of at least 165°F. Fresh beef, veal, lamb, and pork should be cooked to 145°F. Insert a food thermometer into the thickest part of the meat to obtain the final cook temperature. Leftovers can be kept safely in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days and should be discarded after 5 days. Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil to reheat safely. All other leftover foods should be reheated to 165°F while stirring these foods to prevent cold spots and kill any possible bacteria.

**Chill**

Bacteria tend to spread most rapidly at room temperature. Cooling food properly is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Leftovers should be placed in small, shallow containers that are no more than 2 inches deep and then placed in the refrigerator within 2 hours to promote rapid chilling.

For additional information, contact Moore County Environmental Health at 910-947-6283, call the FDA Food Information Line at 1-888-723-3366, or visit the Moore County Health Department website at [www.moorecountync.gov/health](http://www.moorecountync.gov/health) .

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