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Designated regional poison center
for New Jersey by New Jersey
Department of Health and Senior
Services and the American
Association of Poison Control
Centers

PRESS RELEASE

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Please distribute to the public; your local radio, magazines and newspapers; websites; etc.

Countdown to the Holidays:
Let's Talk Food Safety

(Newark, NJ) – With the start of the holiday season just days away, NJ families are in the process of planning and preparing for their holiday menus. With family and friends gathering around the table, it's time to remind holiday chefs and their helpers about safe food handling to prevent foodborne illness.

Clean: Always wash your hands in hot soapy water before and after preparing food. Wash cutting boards, utensils, knives, and countertops after preparing one food and before preparing the next item. **IMPORTANT:** Wash ALL PRODUCE BEFORE SERVING.

Separate: DO NOT cross contaminate foods! Store raw poultry, meat, and seafood on either the bottom shelf of the refrigerator or on a tray, so the juices do not drip onto other foods. To prevent cross contamination, never place cooked food on any unwashed plates that held raw poultry, meat, or seafood. **IMPORTANT:** WASH HANDS after handling RAW FOOD.

Cook: Cook foods to proper temperatures! **IMPORTANT:** The amount of time needed to cook each turkey depends on the weight of the bird. Bake stuffing to 165°F *separately* from turkey (stuffing in the center of the bird often does not reach 165° F). When serving foods, hot foods must be held at 140°F or higher.

Chill: Keep cold foods cold (hold at 40° or colder)! If foods are not stored properly, bacteria can multiply rapidly. Perishable foods should not be left at room temperature. **IMPORTANT:** Refrigerate or freeze leftovers promptly.

Drink: Decrease the possible risk for food poisoning associated with drinking apple cider or juice by buying *pasteurized* apple cider or juice. The label will tell you if the product is pasteurized. Warm your cider to 212°F to help reduce contamination risks. **IMPORTANT:** Alcohol poisoning should always be a concern especially around the holidays when curious children and pets have greater access to cocktails. Empty all glasses and/or cans that contain alcohol as promptly as possible.

Remember, Help is Just a Phone Call Away! For more information on food poisoning risk and treatment call **1-800-222-1222**. The Poison Center Hotline is accessible 24 hours per day, everyday!

located at University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey