FACILITIES SAFETY MEETING
Talking Turkey About Thanksgiving Safety

This is the time of year for cooking and eating wonderful things, such as the turkey feast with all the trimmings that is the focal point of the Thanksgiving holiday. But each year many workers can't return to work right away because of holiday food poisoning. Here are some tips to help keep you and your family safe this Thanksgiving.

Kitchen Safety Tips

Preparing the Thanksgiving meal often is a group project, with many people in the kitchen to help with the chores. And where there's a crowd and noisy chatter, there's a greater chance for an accident to occur. Care should always be taken while working in the kitchen but people should be extra vigilant around the holidays as nearly 50 percent of all house fires across the nation start in the kitchen.

- Make sure your cooking appliances are in good working order.
- Start your holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven. Make sure any old grease or food spills are cleaned up to lessen the chance of a flare-up.
- Keep kitchen clutter and loose clothing away from stove burners.
- Turn pot handles in toward the rear of the stove, out of your child's reach. If the handles are allowed to stick out over the stove, they could be grabbed by a child, spilling their hot contents and causing burns.
- NEVER leave cooking food unattended.
- If the contents in a pot or pan catch fire, do not touch or try to move the pot or pan as you may spread the fire or burn yourself. Extinguish the flames with a metal lid or larger pot. Never use water on a grease fire.
- Use potholders to prevent burns. If you are burned, do not use ice, butter or other substance on the burn. Ice can damage the skin, and butter or other substances can trap the heat in. Instead, let the burn cool off under a steady stream of cool tap water and seek medical assistance if necessary.
- Keep holiday decorations away from heat sources such as stoves, candles or heaters.

Thanksgiving Food Safety Tips

Don't be a turkey! Practice safe food preparation procedures to reduce the risk of foodborne illness to your family and guests this Thanksgiving holiday. Meat and poultry, the centerpiece of most holiday meals, can be a source of foodborne disease unless handled and prepared properly.

- Purchase only government-inspected meat and poultry products. Check the "sell by" date on all food you buy, and never buy packages if that date has passed.
- Wash your hands thoroughly before and after preparing any food product.
- Never thaw meat or poultry at room temperature. When thawing a frozen turkey, either keep it refrigerated on a tray, under cold running water, or in the microwave. When thawing in a microwave, finish cooking in a conventional oven immediately.

- Keep two cutting boards handy -- one for preparing raw meat, poultry, and fish, and the other for cutting cooked food and preparing salads. After using utensils or cutting boards for raw food preparation or handling, thoroughly wash these items before using them for the preparation or handling of any other food.
- When preparing eggnog, hollandaise sauce, Caesar-salad dressing, or other recipes that call for raw or undercooked eggs, use a pasteurized egg product instead of regular eggs.

After the Feast

- Don't allow cooked food to sit out at room temperature for more than two hours. Leftovers should be refrigerated promptly after the meal. Freeze leftovers that won't be eaten within a few days. It's also a good idea to divide large amounts of leftovers into smaller portions for quick chilling. Leftover meat stored in the refrigerator should be eaten within three to four days.
- Never taste leftover food that looks or smells strange. When in doubt, throw it out!
- Reheat leftovers to 165º F throughout or until steaming hot. Soups, sauces, and gravies should be brought to a rolling boil for at least one minute.

What About Your Pets?

Animal organizations urge you NOT to share your holiday leftovers with your family pet. This includes the table scraps and the dangerous turkey bones! Turkey bones, like other bird bones, are hollow and will break easily and splinter into very sharp pieces. When a dog or cat swallows the bones they can become lodged in the throat or intestinal tract and cause blockage or injury.

Driving Home

The average number of traffic fatalities during the six most recent Thanksgiving Day holiday periods was 3.4 percent higher than similar non-holiday periods. Use a designated driver, get plenty of rest beforehand, and watch out for those who don’t.

Please have a happy Thanksgiving!