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HEALTH DEPARTMENT of Northwest Michigan

Serving Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet & Otsego Counties

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Food Safety during the Holidays

With the holiday season upon us, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan wishes to remind you and yours to practice food safety.

As dining with family falls into many holiday celebrations, it's important to remember a few simple rules from the Center of Disease Control to help prevent foodborne illness or food poisoning:

- ***Wash your hands regularly.*** This is a great way to prevent the spread of germs. It's important to wash before, during and after prepping food; before eating food; after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing; before and after caring for someone who is sick.
- ***Cook food thoroughly.*** Poultry, meat, seafood and eggs can carry germs that cause food poisoning. Ensure that foods have been cooked to a safe temperature by using a food thermometer. A whole turkey is safe when cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F.
- ***Thaw your turkey safely.*** Rather than thawing turkey on the counter, thaw in the refrigerator or in a sink of cold water (change water every 30 minutes). A 20-pound turkey typically takes 4-5 days to thaw under refrigeration or 8-10 hours using the cold water method.
- ***Keep hot food hot and cold food cold.*** After food is cooked, keep hot food hot and cold food cold. If food is left between 40°F and 140°F, bacteria can grow rapidly. Refrigerate or freeze foods within two hours.
- ***Keep foods separate.*** Store poultry, meat, seafood and eggs separate from all other foods in the refrigerator. Ensure that juices from the poultry, meat, seafood and eggs can't drip or contaminate other foods.

Following the CDC's guidelines of: Clean – Separate – Cook – Chill can be a great way to protect you and yours during your holiday gatherings and anytime you cook.

For additional information about Food Safety, visit the CDC Food Safety website at https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/communication/holidays.

The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties. For more information, visit nwhealth.org.

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