



Potluck Safety

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A popular way to celebrate the Holidays with coworkers and friends is with a Potluck Buffet. It can be a great way to serve lots of different, delicious foods to large gatherings of people. However, festive times for giving and sharing should not include sharing foodborne illness. Bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses like to crash potlucks and parties, and they don't usually leave their calling card until the party is over. Although you can't see, taste or smell them, you sure can feel them when you get sick hours or days later. Follow these storage, sanitation and cooking tips to keep these uninvited guests away from your Holiday Potlucks.

Keep it Clean!

The #1 cause of foodborne illnesses is germs from dirty hands. To reduce the odds of spreading illnesses, wash your hands:

- Before preparing or eating food
- After going to the bathroom
- After diapering a child
- After caring for pets
- After coughing or sneezing

In order to properly wash your hands, you must use soap and running water. Scrub your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds before you rinse. Remember to dry your hands with a clean paper towel

Feeling Ill?????

Don't pass it on. Keep other people healthier do not prepare food for the potluck if anyone in your household has been sick with vomiting or diarrhea during the week

Clean/Sanitize Utensils and Surfaces

In addition to washing your hands before and after handling food, keep your kitchen, dishes and utensils clean. Always serve food on clean plates – not those previously holding raw meat and poultry. Wash utensils and surfaces with hot, soapy water before and after handling any food. Wipe counters and dip cleaned utensils in a mixture of bleach and water to add extra protections (1 tsp. bleach to 1 gallon water).

Keep it Separate!!!

Germs from raw meat can contaminate other foods. Handle raw meat safely to prevent cross-contamination (spreading bacteria from meat to other foods).

While shopping, choose meats last to keep them cold, and bag them in plastic to keep their juices from your other foods

Meat juices might drip. Store raw meats and eggs below other foods in your refrigerator. If this is not possible, keep them in a water-tight container.

Make sure to wash your hands and all surfaces and utensils that touch raw meat before you work with other foods.

Be sure to wash all fruits and vegetables under running water before you prepare them. Fruits and veggies need a good shower after playing in the dirt!

Cook it!

Cooking meats to the proper temperature kills or destroys most of the parasites, bacteria and viruses that might be in the meat. Use a thermometer to check temperatures.

Cook all raw beef, pork, lamb and veal steaks, chops and roasts to a minimum internal temperature of 145 degrees F as measured with a food thermometer before removing meat from the heat source



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Cook all raw ground beef, pork, lamb and veal to an internal temperature of 160° F as measured with a food thermometer

Cook all poultry to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165° F as measured with a food thermometer.

Keep it Hot—Once cooked, Potentially Hazardous Foods must be kept hot at 140° F or hotter to keep bacteria from growing. Use crock pots, roaster ovens, chafing dishes, warming trays or other ways to keep your food safe to serve to your guests. If you cannot keep the food hot, it is safest to throw the food away after 2 hours. Be safe, rather than sorry.

Potentially Hazardous Foods (PHF)?

- Beef, poultry, pork, lamb, fish and shellfish
- Milk and dairy products
- Sprouts and cut melons
- Cooked potatoes, beans, pasta and rice

*It is important to keep PHF out of the "Danger Zone" (avoid temperatures between 40°F and 140°F.

If foods were previously cooked and cooled, they should be reheated to 165°F before serving.

When Serving - All foods should have their own dedicated serving utensils: spoons, tongs, forks, etc. No one should handle the food with bare hands

Be sure to provide plenty of spaces to dispose of garbage. Keeping garbage away will help to prevent cross-contaminating the food area.

Cool it!- PHF should not be in the "Danger Zone" for more than 2 hours (or for more than 1 hour outdoors during the hot summer heat).

If you are unable to control the temperature of PHF, eat them within 2 hours or throw them away.

If foods have been properly maintained (hot/cold), it is safe to chill them as leftovers.

It is important to cool foods quickly!

- Allow for air circulation – don't pack the refrigerator too tightly
- Keep the lid off until the food is cold---lids act like a "blanket" and keep the food warm longer
- Keep the uncovered container on the top shelf (cover the container when the food is cold)
- Don't fill the containers too full (no more than 2" deep for thick foods like stew or beans)
- Get hot food in the refrigerator within 2 hours

Food Storage Guidelines:

(Short, but safer, times to keep your foods fresh)

Remember---Foods are safest within the first 2 hours after they are cooked!!

For potluck safety, prepare hot dishes right before the meal, rather than cooking and cooling in advance and then reheating at the potluck.

So, enjoy your Holiday Potlucks with the above precautions in mind!!

For additional information about Food Safety, please visit the following site:

[Holiday Party](#)

Item	Refrigerator	Freezer	Item	Refrigerator	Freezer
Cooked meats	3-4 days	3-6 Months	Hard cooked	1 week	No
Lunch meats	3-4 days	No	Milk	5 days	1 month
Raw meats	2-3 days	2-3 months	Cold salads	3-5 days	No
Shell eggs	4 weeks	Yuck!			