



The Voice for Safe Food

4809 N Ravenswood Ave., Chicago, IL 60640. (773) 269-6555.
info@stopfoodborneillness.org

Follow These Food Safety Tips During the Jewish High Holidays to STOP Foodborne Illness

Among its many highlights, Autumn ushers in the Jewish High Holidays. While this is a time of celebration and prayer, it also means cooking meals for family and friends. To make sure you are serving a safe and healthy holiday meal, here are some tips to help reduce the risk of foodborne illness while still adhering to Kosher rules. Remember that practicing safe cooking procedures is not just for the host. Guests should bring dishes, not pathogens, and should do their part in helping holiday dinners stay yummy and healthy.



For hosting a safe holiday meal, [STOP Foodborne Illness](#) suggests:

- **Have a plan!** Cooking such an important meal for a large gathering of friends and family can be stressful and lead to subpar approaches to handling food. Think about your refrigerator, freezer and oven space, and how to best keep hot foods hot (140 degrees or higher) and cold foods cold (40 degrees or below). If you need to use coolers, make sure you have plenty of clean ice. Whatever you do, don't rely on the natural outdoor temperature on the porch to keep foods at proper temperature!
- **Wash your hands.** When preparing food, STOP Foodborne Illness emphasizes the importance of [washing your hands thoroughly](#) with soap and

water and keeping work surfaces clean.

- **Wash produce.** STOP Foodborne Illness recommends [washing even prepackaged greens](#), to minimize potential bacterial contamination
- **Keep cooking surfaces neat** . While Kosher rules require the separation of meat and dairy during preparation, serving, and eating, it is also important to separate meat preparation from other foods for health safety reasons. Cross-contaminating raw meat with food that does not get cooked could lead to the spread of foodborne illness. Make sure kitchen counters, sponges, cutting boards, and knives are all well-scrubbed with soap and water.
- **Defrost safely.** Properly defrost your turkey by allocating 24 hours per 5 pounds to defrost in the refrigerator. If you need to defrost quicker, place the bird in cold water and change the cold water bath every 30 minutes.
- **Cook to proper temperature.** Use a thermometer to ensure food has been cooked enough to kill bacteria. Find out more with this [safe food temperature guide](#).
- **Refrigerate leftovers within two hours of preparation** . It's easy to leave food out while you linger at the table and enjoy your guests' company, but letting food sit out too long is one of the biggest holiday food safety problems. Leaving food out for more than two hours puts it in the danger zone-above 40 degrees and below 140 degrees-which facilitates bacterial growth. To avoid this, STOP recommends [storing leftovers in 2-inch deep, shallow containers](#), and making sure the refrigerator is not over-packed and that there is plenty of air circulating around the food so it can be properly cooled.
- **Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees.** When it's time to eat leftovers, remember to use your thermometer. Zapping the plate of food in the microwave for a few minutes is not sufficiently safe because microwaves heat in an uneven manner.
- **Keep guests (and sticky fingers) out of the kitchen.** Holidays occur during cold and flu season, meaning germs and bacteria are more prevalent. It's important that no one is picking at food while it's being prepared. Serve appetizers to give guests something to nibble on until the meal is ready.

Food Safety Tips for Holiday Guests:

For those who will be guests at the holiday table, it is crucial you do your part in preventing foodborne illness, too. STOP Foodborne Illness urges you to do a couple of things:

- **Wash your hands with soap and water.** Even if you don't prepare food you should still wash your hands before you eat.
- **Pack hot foods while hot** . Don't wait for hot foods to cool down before packing. If you're preparing a hot dish at home and bringing it to the party -- pack it right away! Put piping hot foods immediately into an insulated thermos or container. You can also preheat your thermos by filling it with boiling water, letting it sit for a few minutes, pouring out the water, and then adding your hot food.

Food Safety Tips for Holiday Guests:

Part of celebrating the High Holidays means eating food with religious symbolism and STOP Foodborne Illness urges you to keep food safety in mind when serving traditional foods during Passover, Rosh Hashana, and Yom Kippur

- **Eggs** . Highlighted in challah bread and in beitzah (a roasted egg), eggs make numerous appearances on the holiday menu. To prevent the spread of foodborne illness, STOP recommends thoroughly cooking eggs as well as only serving pasteurized eggs. Learn more about the [health benefits of pasteurization](#).
- **New fruit**. On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, a "new fruit," meaning a fruit that has recently come into season but that we have not yet had the opportunity to eat, is served. [Make sure fruits are properly rinsed](#) before eating.
- **Fish**. Traditionally eaten during the Rosh Hashanah holiday meal, fish symbolizes fertility and abundance for the new year but it also poses severe health risks. Learn more about [safe fish](#).
- **Grape juice**. While those of age drink wine, grape juice is served to children, but make sure to only serve pasteurized juice as pasteurization destroys any harmful bacteria.

Feel free to share some quick tips from STOP's [Food Safety News](#) with friends and family to make sure you are helping keep each other safe during this holiday season.

STOP Foodborne Illness Is Here to Help You

STOP Foodborne Illness is a national, nonprofit, public health organization dedicated to preventing illness and death from foodborne pathogens by advocating for sound public policies, building public awareness and assisting those impacted by foodborne illness. For more food safety tips please visit www.stopfoodborneillness.org/awareness/. If you think you have been sickened from food, check and contact your local health professional.

For questions and personal assistance, please contact STOP Foodborne Illness' Community Coordinator, Stanley Rutledge, at srutledge@stopfoodborneillness.org or 773-269-6555 x7.

Share: 

###

[Downloadable Word version of the STOP Foodborne Illness release and hi-resolution photos](#)

[Subscribe to STOP Foodborne Illness News](#)

Media contact:

[Kurman Communications, Inc.](#)
Cindy Kurman or Lee Barrie
(312) 651-9000
kurmanstaff@kurman.com