



Ladies Have You Heard?

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FOOD SAFETY CRITICAL DURING HOLIDAYS

Food bacteria never take a holiday. In fact, they're just as busy during the Christmas holiday as they are on the fourth of July. Christmas is a time for cooking special foods, entertaining guests and changing from the everyday routine. Don't let this carefree atmosphere trick you into forgetting food safety precautions.

After you finish your holiday food shopping, rush your food home where you can put it in the refrigerator or freezer. Don't let the groceries sit in a warm car while you run other errands. Remember to keep hot foods hot - above 140° F - and cold foods cold - below 40° F - to prevent bacteria growth.

Wash your hands with soap and hot water before handling any

foods. After handling raw meat, fish, poultry or eggs, wash hands, utensils and flat surfaces with soap and hot water before working with other foods. Remove stubborn bacteria from a cutting board by scrubbing it with soap, rinsing it in hot water and then applying chlorine bleach.

Roasting a turkey for Christmas? Cook it completely to an internal temperature of 185° F. Never partially cook a turkey because you plan to finish cooking it later. Bacteria can survive in partially-cooked poultry and "staph" bacteria may produce toxins.

Remember to cook the turkey stuffing thoroughly, too. If you plan to stuff the turkey, cook it until a thermometer inserted into the stuffing reaches at least 165° F. Bacteria grow rapidly in lukewarm stuffing.

Cool leftovers quickly and put them in the refrigerator. Don't

hold any broth or gravy more than a day or two. To serve again, reheat and boil for several minutes before serving - then serve it hot.

Refrigerate cream, custard, meringue pies and other foods with custard fillings. It is dangerous to let foods of this kind stand at room temperature.

Freeze foods promptly. Don't let huge quantities of party-leftovers fill your refrigerator for days. Plan in advance for ways that you can use the foods. Then freeze the rest. If in doubt about a leftover food throw it out. Food poisoning does not necessarily have a bad smell or taste. Just because food doesn't seem spoiled doesn't mean it is all right to eat.

YOUNG VISITORS REQUIRE SPECIAL ATTENTION TO SAFETY

The joy of a family holiday can turn to tragedy if homes have not been safety checked to protect young visitors. I would like to warn grandparents and others whose homes are not childproofed to correct potential poisoning problems and accident hazards before the arrival of small holiday guests.

Store cleaning agents and drugs in locked cabinets or on shelves far from reach of curious youngsters

Run a check behind sofas and in cozy corners. Children under five squirm into tight spots and are attracted by forgotten ant traps and rat baits. Don't leave pesticides on the floor of the garage or shed. Put garden sprayers and crop dusters safely away.

Lift poisonous plants such as Christmas poinsettias above toddler grabbing level. Close liquor cabinet doors and refrain from leaving alcoholic drinks unattended.

Accidental poisoning is the hazard that first jumps to mind. But there are other dangers as well. When small children are concerned, it's best to view everything with suspicion.

Keep buttons, paper clips, straight pins and other small objects out of pre-schoolers hands. These items have a way of disappearing into ears, noses, and throats.

Repair loose or cracked electric sockets. Keep toilet seat covers closed; move sharp objects such as knives, letter openers and scissors out of easy reach.

Childproofing takes a little effort. But it may save a life. Do you have a better way to spend your time?



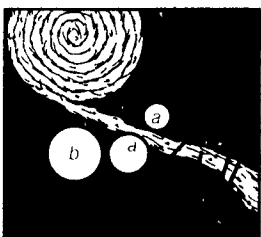
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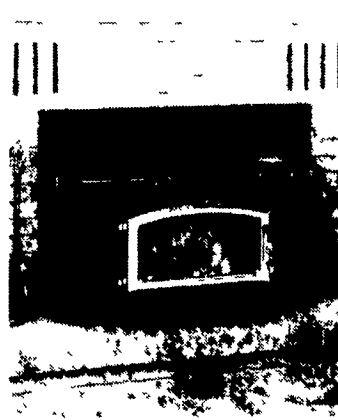
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