

Nov. 20, 2015

## DEPARTMENT ENCOURAGES PROPER FOOD SAFETY THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

*Prevent illness by implementing good food handling practices*



### Contact:

Communications Office

[NewsMedia@flhealth.gov](mailto:NewsMedia@flhealth.gov)

850-245-4111

**Tallahassee, Fla.** —Food traditionally plays a large role in holiday festivities. With Thanksgiving right around the corner, the Florida Department of Health is encouraging Floridians to keep safe food preparation and handling practices in mind.

“As you make plans to enjoy Thanksgiving with family and friends, be sure to focus on preparations for healthy eating,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Safe food handling and Fresh from Florida fruits and vegetables are essential ingredients for a healthy holiday.”

The department recommends the following for reducing the chances of food contamination.

- **Clean.** Wash hands, utensils and surfaces before and after food preparation, especially after preparing meat, poultry, eggs or seafood. Be sure to keep all countertops and work areas clean with hot, soapy water;
- **Cook to Proper Temperature.** Read the cooking directions on packaging before preparing. The safest thawing method is in the refrigerator at 40 degrees. Make sure the food is cooked at the proper internal temperature and check for doneness with a food thermometer;
- **Chill – Refrigerate Properly.** Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food and leftovers within two hours. Make sure the refrigerator is set at no higher than 40 degrees and the freezer is set at 0 degrees; and
- **Separate – Don’t cross contaminate.** Keep raw meats, poultry, eggs and seafood and their juices away from ready to eat food. It is recommended that leftovers be heated to 165 degrees.

For more information on how to keep your family safe from foodborne-illness this holiday season, visit <http://www.foodsafety.gov/>.

### About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on Twitter at [@HealthyFla](https://twitter.com/HealthyFla) and on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/FloridaHealth). For more information about the Florida Department of Health please visit [www.FloridaHealth.gov](http://www.FloridaHealth.gov).