

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Don't Turn Your Holiday Feats into A Foodborne Illness Fiasco

Safe handling and proper cooking times can help reduce your risk of illness

November 16, 2009 - ALEXANDRIA, LA – The holidays are approaching and that means families and fun. It also means food. When preparing food for the holiday festivities, food safety is a big priority. To help you prepare for your holiday feast, here are some helpful tips from the food safety law firm Neblett, Beard & Arsenault to help keep your family and guests safe from the tiny food pathogens that pack a powerful punch.

“QUOTE” something like - Foodborne illness can have long term consequences. With the holidays right around the corner, it is important to follow safe handling techniques and proper cooking times. You don't want to have your holiday feast to turn into a fiasco, ”said food safety lawyer Richard J. Arsenault.

Each year, 1 in 4 Americans fall victim to food poisoning, 5,000 will lose the battle to foodborne illness. Although, there is no silver bullet to preventing foodborne illness, these safe handling techniques can help lessen your risk of foodborne illness.

Safe Food Handling

Handwashing is essential to stop cross contamination from occurring. Wash your hands before and after handling all food. Keep surfaces and utensils disinfected and keep foods separated, especially raw meats. Be aware that even though all precautions are taken, cross contamination is always a threat when infected product is brought into the home

Safe Food Temperatures

If you are cooking foods for your party, be sure to cook foods thoroughly to safe minimum internal temperatures. Beef, veal, and lamb steaks, roasts, and chops may be cooked to 145 °F. All cuts of pork must be cooked to 160 °F. Ground beef, veal and lamb to should be cooked to 160 °F, and all poultry, including turkey, should reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 °F.

Preparing A Turkey

A whole turkey is safe cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165 °F throughout the bird. Check the temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and the thickest part of the breast. The temperature indicator found in some birds can be inaccurate, so always use a meat thermometer when testing internal temperature. When turkey is removed from the oven, let it stand 20 minutes. Avoid cooking your stuffing inside the bird, as it can fail to reach a safe temperature and become a source of bacteria like salmonella and campylobacter.

Keep Hot Foods HOT And Cold Foods COLD

Hot foods should be held at 140 °F or warmer. Cold foods should be held at 40 °F or colder. Foodborne bacterial pathogens thrive in the temperatures between the temperatures 40 °F and 140 °F. Keep track of how long foods have been sitting out and discard anything that has sat out for two hours or more.

Eggs and Desserts

Eggs are a necessity in a lot of holiday dishes and desserts. Many of these traditional recipes call for egg washes and uncooked eggs. But consuming uncooked and undercooked chicken eggs is never recommended. When baking using raw egg, people should avoid licking the spoon or the mixing bowl covered in uncooked batter. Eggs can be contaminated with Salmonella enteritidis, so it's important to cook eggs thoroughly to kill any bacteria that may be present.

“QUOTE” regardless of what you do, you can never fully eliminate the threat of illness if the food you are preparing is contaminated with a dangerous food pathogen. We have represented food poisoning victims who followed every safety rule and still had to deal with serious foodborne illness and its devastating complications. The only true way to prevent food poisoning from affecting Americans is to eliminate the food contaminates during the manufacturing process. However, that responsibility rests with the food producers, not the customers,” added Richard J. Arsenault.

ABOUT NEBLETT, BEARD & ARSENAULT - Neblett, Beard & Arsenault is a nationally recognized law firm with over 25 years representing victims across the country in foodborne illness and other injury litigation. The firm actively represents victims of food borne illness litigation including victims of Peanut Corporation of America (PCA) salmonella outbreak and the Nestle E. coli outbreak.