



## AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF POISON CONTROL CENTERS

### Alert...

## Precautions for Holiday Meal Preparation

For many Americans, summer holidays mean spending more time cooking and entertaining outside. To ensure a safe, fun, and poison-free summer, consider the following holiday cooking precautions when preparing, cooking, and storing food:

When **preparing** foods always wash your hands, kitchen surfaces, utensils, and cutting boards. Washing your hands along with materials used to prep is especially important after handling or preparing uncooked food and before touching or eating foods. If you're outside at a picnic and can't wash your hands (or your children's hands), use an antibacterial hand sanitizer. If you have questions or suspect a poisoning from hand sanitizer, call the **Poison Help Hotline** at 1-800-222-1222 immediately. Poison Help is also available by visiting [Poisonhelp.org](http://Poisonhelp.org).

Using a food thermometer while **cooking** is an easy to implement strategy to check if your meat has reached the internal temperature required to kill harmful bacteria. The bacteria that causes food poisoning multiply quickest between 40° and 140° Fahrenheit. In general, it's best to keep hot food hot, and cold food cold.

When **storing** leftovers remember to refrigerate them within two hours to reduce the risk of bacterial growth. Prevent cross-contamination by completely covering and securing foods in the refrigerator. Freeze or dispose of leftovers within 3-4 days. Also, remember to store alcohol out of children's reach and not in an easily accessible cooler.

In addition to preparing, cooking, and storing foods, remember to avoid wild mushrooms and other plants that can be toxic while enjoying meals outside.

Following these simple precautions can prevent food poisoning while cooking and entertaining outside. If you have any questions about food poisoning, or if you or someone you know suspects a poisoning, call the **Poison Help Hotline** at 1-800-222-1222.

Be prepared in an emergency to get free, confidential, and expert help 24/7/365:

#### QUICK TIPS TO PREVENT HARMFUL EXPOSURES

**Prepare:** Always wash your hands, kitchen surfaces, utensils, and cutting boards.

**Cook:** Use a food thermometer to check if your meat has reached the internal temperature required to kill harmful bacteria.

**Store:** Freeze or dispose of leftovers within 3-4 days. Keep alcohol out of children's reach.

**Call:** Poison Help at **1-800-222-1222** if you have questions or suspect food poisoning.

- **Text** - POISON to 797979 to save the Poison Help Hotline as a contact in your mobile phone.
- **Save** - the Poison Help Hotline number, 1-800-222-1222, into your mobile phone.
- **Display** - the Poison Help Hotline contact number throughout your home.
- **Get Info via:**

*Web:* [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org)

*Twitter:* <https://twitter.com/AAPCC>

*Facebook:* <https://www.facebook.com/aapcc/>

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**For More Information, Contact:**

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