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New Holiday Food Safety Traditions

Eat, drink, and be merry with these simple food safety tips according to the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics:

Reckless Thawing

Old Habit: Thawing frozen turkey or other meats on the kitchen counter or under hot water in the kitchen sink.

New Tradition: To prevent the spread of harmful bacteria, thaw frozen meats and poultry in a refrigerator set at or below 40°F. If pressed for time, you can thaw a wrapped frozen turkey in a sink filled with cold tap water, making sure to change the water every 30 minutes.

Holding Out on Hot Stuff

Old Habit: When preparing a cooked dish that needs to chill for storage or serving purposes, many people think it is necessary to wait until foods cool before putting them in the refrigerator.

New Tradition: To ensure the freshness and safety of your freshly cooked foods, place them promptly in the refrigerator after cooking. Using shallow containers will allow them to cool more quickly.

Covered Dish Delivery

Old Habit: Holiday festivities with family and friends may require travel, which can result in long car rides for both guests and dishes brought along to share.

New Tradition: Pay close attention to how much time your prepared dish will be out of the refrigerator or oven. Pack a cold dish in a cooler with ice packs to keep it cold while traveling. Transport hot dishes in an insulated bag or covered with foil and insulated with towels. Keep cold dishes under 40°F and hot dishes above 140°F. If the temperature is outside these zones for two hours or more, don't eat it!

Rocking the Gravy Boat

Old Habit: While most home cooks remember to bring gravy to a boil before serving it, many forget the same rule also applies during the encore presentation.

New Tradition: In order to eliminate harmful bacteria, always bring leftover gravy to a boil on the stove before serving it a second time. Any leftover gravy should be used within three to four days.

Festive Floor-Grazing

Old Habit: The "ten-second-rule" isn't just popular with children. Many adults also say they abide by a specific "rule" to determine how long food is safe to eat after it falls on the floor.

New Tradition: Tragic as it may be when a holiday treat topples to the ground, it is never a good idea to eat it. In the spirit of "out with the old, in with the new," toss it.

Content courtesy of Andrea Nisley, UNL Extension Educator, Dawson County

Source: [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#)