

# Nutrition News

## for Seniors


**EAT WELL**

Provided by the Nutrition Division of the Westchester County Department of Senior Programs and Services

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## Holiday Home Food Safety and Storage

Enjoying food with family and friends is one of the highlights of the holiday season. Everyone wants to help, but too many cooks in the kitchen can result in an increased risk of food-borne illness. This is especially true when people who rarely prepare food at other times of the year are suddenly in front of the stove.



By taking precautions, you can prevent most cases of food-borne illness. Review the simple tips below and share them with all the helpers in your kitchen. Then, eat, drink and be merry.

### Soap Up

- Make sure everyone handling food washes their hands before, during and after food preparation.
- Keep kitchen surfaces — such as appliances, countertops, cutting boards and utensils — clean with hot, soapy water throughout meal preparation.
- Use two cutting boards: one for raw meat, poultry and fish and the other for ready-to-eat foods like fruits and vegetables.
- Use separate spoons and forks to stir, taste and serve food.

### Take Care When Thawing

- To prevent the spread of harmful bacteria, thaw frozen turkey and other meats in a refrigerator set below 40°F or in the microwave. Never thaw meats on the kitchen counter, in the oven or under hot water in the sink.
- When defrosting food in the refrigerator, cover raw meat and place it on the bottom shelf so juices don't drip onto other foods.
- After defrosting food in the microwave, cook it right away.
- If you are pressed for time, thaw a wrapped frozen turkey (breast-side down) in a sink filled with cold tap water. Be sure to change the water every 30 minutes.



### Cook to Temperature

- Use a meat thermometer to make sure meats reach a safe internal temperature. This is the only reliable way to determine they are fully cooked.
- Cook whole turkeys to 165°F. Check the temperature with a meat thermometer at the innermost part of the thigh. If you're cooking a stuffed turkey, be sure stuffing reaches 165°F before serving.

- Cook holiday hams and pork roasts to 145°F.\*

\* Allow to rest 3 minutes before carving or consuming.

## Follow the Two-Hour Rule

- Whether served family-style or as a buffet, festive feasts often last for hours. After more than two hours, bacteria rapidly begin to multiply on perishable food items. For longer gatherings, keep some fresh food in the fridge to bring out at the two-hour mark.

## Chill Dishes Right Away

- It's a common mistake to let cooked foods cool before they go into the refrigerator. To chill a dish for serving or storage, promptly place it in the refrigerator after cooking. This ensures freshness and safety.
- Set your refrigerator below 40°F and your freezer below 0°F.
- Store leftovers in airtight, shallow containers (two inches deep or less).
- Refrigerate or freeze leftovers within two hours of cooking the food. Remove turkey from the bone and store it separately from the stuffing and gravy. You can leave sliced breast meat, legs and wings whole.



## Use It or Lose It

- Reheat leftovers to 165°F. Bring leftover gravy to a steady boil on the stove before serving it a second time.
- Use refrigerated cooked turkey within three to four days. Use stuffing and gravy within one to two days.
- Eat leftover casseroles and cooked vegetables within three to four days.
- Finish fruit, cream pies and cheese cake within two to three days.
- If in doubt, throw out food you believe may not be safe to eat.

## Don't Sample the Cookie Dough

- When baking cookies, cakes or brownies that include eggs as an ingredient, resist the temptation to taste raw dough or batter. Raw eggs may contain harmful bacteria that can lead to food poisoning. Cook treats before surrendering to your sweet tooth.

## In the Kitchen:

### Brussels Sprouts with Bacon-Horseradish Cream



#### Ingredients and Instructions:

- 1 1/2 pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved
- 4 strips crisp-cooked bacon, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup reduced-fat sour cream
- 2 teaspoons prepared horseradish
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon freshly ground pepper

1. Place a steamer basket in a large saucepan, add 1 inch of water and bring to a boil. Put Brussels sprouts in the basket and steam until tender, 6 to 8 minutes.
2. Mix bacon, sour cream, horseradish, salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Add the Brussels sprouts and toss to coat.

**Makes:** 6 servings, 1 cup each.

**Nutrition Facts Per serving:** 80 calories; 3g fat (1 g sat, 1 g mono); 8mg cholesterol; 9g carbohydrates; 0g added sugars; 5g protein; 3g fiber; 222mg sodium; 431mg potassium

*Source: www.eatingwell.com. November/December 2008*

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