



## *TrainSafe Home Food Safety Tips for the Holidays!*

*Most people do not realize that foodborne illness outbreaks can occur as easily as one food preparation mistake or one instance of cross-contamination. Home food safety is always important, but never so much as when cooking for the holidays. Our TrainSafe® Food Safety Conductor, George, has some easy and steadfast tips for you this holiday season:*

*“Hello everyone! I am George, the TrainSafe® Food Safety Conductor here to share my simple tips for keeping you, your family and your friends feeling full over the Holidays and not sick.*

*The majority of reported food borne illnesses occur in your home. So just like restaurant employees who must learn about food safety, so should you.*

*These are my TrainSafe® tips that to keep your holiday gathering food-safe and fun.*

### **Basic food safety facts:**

- \* Food should not stay out for longer than four hours –temperature danger zone is 41 degrees to 135 degrees’*
- \* You can hold hot food at 136 degrees or higher and you can hold cold food at 40 degrees and lower.*

### **Getting Started:**

- \* Wash your hands!*
- \* This is an important aspect of your cooking voyage. Be sure to wash your hands between food tasks and after touching the garbage or taking a bathroom break!*

### **Clean, Clean, Clean!**

- \* Clean and sanitize the countertops, cuttings boards, knives, bowls and other utensils clean and dry when not in use.*

### **Cross-contamination:**

- \* Keep one cutting board exclusively to cut raw meat. Thoroughly clean cutting surfaces after each use with soap and hot water and sanitizer if possible.*
- \* Taste testing is necessary when seasoning food. Use a separate spoon when sampling and do not re-dip with a used spoon. Do not taste from the same spoon that is used to stir the pot.*
- \* Always put cooked meat on a clean platter: Don’t re-use a platter or plate that has held raw meat unless it has been thoroughly cleaned.*

**Thawing:**

*\* Follow food safety guidelines when thawing turkeys: Refrigerator thawing takes approximately 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds of turkey in 40° F . This method is the safest for thawing. Be sure to place the turkey in a container and on the bottom to the refrigerator so that you do not contaminate ready-to-eat foods with leakage from the thawing.*

*\* Cold water thawing must be monitored and the water must be changed every 30 minutes. Be sure to allow 30 minutes for each pound for defrosting.*

*\* If you choose to defrost in a microwave, you must begin cooking turkey immediately upon completion of thaw.*

**Cooking the Turkey:**

*\* Cook fresh turkeys within two days, thawed ones within four days. Read and follow the cooking directions on the label. Cook turkey until it is done (165°F). Do not slow cook overnight at low temperatures or partially cook. Some turkeys come with pop-up thermometers. They are to be used only as a guide. Take the temperature with a meat thermometer to be sure the temperature is over 165°F.*

*\* Stuffing should not be prepared a day ahead and the turkey should not be stuffed until ready to cook. A quicker, safer method is to cook the stuffing separately in a casserole, using some of the pan juices to flavor and moisten the stuffing.*

*\* Eat the meal as soon as soon as it is prepared.*

**Leftovers:**

*\* Properly stored leftovers can be refrigerated for 2 to 3 days. Freeze if longer storage is required. Reheat all leftovers to 165°F. (Use your meat thermometer.) Gravy should be brought to a rolling boil.*

*Enjoy a safe and happy meal! George*