

Keep it Safe: Keeping Thanksgiving Clean



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**Keep it safe by keeping
it clean this
Thanksgiving!**

November is here, and that means Thanksgiving is right around the corner. For most of us, Thanksgiving is a holiday of getting together with friends and family, and sometimes, that means bringing along a dish or two for the holiday table. While most of us love getting to share some of Aunt Mary's famous pumpkin pie, what we don't love is sharing bacteria that can make us sick. So play it safe in the kitchen, and be sure to follow these simple tips. Your family, and your tummy, will thank you!

Clean enough to cook on?

Kitchen safety starts before the first ingredients are mixed. Use hot water and soap, or even steam, to disinfect all food preparation surfaces. Starting with a clean counter is a great foundation for safe cooking. In addition to cleaning your counters, be sure that cutting boards, dishes and utensils are also cleaned thoroughly before you start preparing your meal. It sounds obvious, but many people just grab a cutting board out of their cabinet and don't wash it before using!

Keep 'em separated!

The biggest danger during holiday cooking (after deep fried turkey fires, that is!) is cross contamination. Use only one knife

and cutting board set for meats, and another one for veggies, and always wash your hands before moving from one to the other. Some cooks keep color coded cutting boards just to help keep this straight. Be sure to ALWAYS wash your hands in soap and water after touching raw meats, poultry, fish or eggs. If you don't, you can transfer dangerous bacteria from uncooked foods to other parts of your meal.

Never use the same platter to hold foods after they've been cooked as you used to hold them beforehand without washing it first. The meat that you just cooked to kill the bacteria will just pick it right up again from a dirty plate.

After you're done with all of the prep work and you've gotten your dishes in the oven, be sure to wash your hands, utensils, and cutting boards with hot, soapy water again. Finally, disinfect your counters after cooking as well, to minimize the risk of bacterial illness. Taking the time to keep it clean this holiday can mean a much more enjoyable meal for you, and your entire family.

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