



HASTINGS COUNCIL  
EXECUTIVE SERVICES  
MEDIA RELEASE

**Don't Let Food Poisoning Dampen Your Christmas Spirit  
21 December 2004**

Parliamentary Secretary for Health, Christopher Pyne, today launched some useful tips prepared by the Food Safety Information Council on how to avoid food poisoning over the Christmas and summer period.

"The holiday period is a danger time for food poisoning, particularly for vulnerable groups such as young children and the elderly as their immune systems are not as strong and they can also get easily dehydrated," Mr Pyne said.

"This is the time of year we enjoy getting together with all the generations of our families. We have to make sure that we protect all our family members," he said.

"Christmas is a time of higher risk for food poisoning because the weather is hot, the fridge is overloaded and we're cooking for more people than we usually do. It all makes for perfect conditions for food poisoning bugs to multiply leading to food poisoning."

Hastings Council, Food Safety Officer, Johanne Fudge advises that by following a few simple rules families can make for a safe and enjoyable holiday."

- Avoid keeping food in the temperature danger zone between 5°C and 60°C where food poisoning bacteria grow best.
- You can defrost the turkey in the fridge, or ask your butcher to defrost it in the coolroom but make sure it is completely defrosted in the centre before cooking. It's OK to defrost a turkey on the benchtop, but you must make sure it is thoroughly cooked all the way through to make sure any bacteria are killed - use a meat thermometer to check that the temperature in the thickest part reaches 75 degrees Celsius.
- Before preparing food for Christmas make sure that there is enough room in the fridge to keep cold food at or less than 5°C.
- If there is not enough room in the fridge, remember that soft drinks and alcohol, pickles, jams and other acidic condiments do not require refrigeration to remain safe. Drinks can be kept cold in an esky with ice.
- Cook foods properly. All rolled & stuffed roasts, poultry, sausages, mince dishes need to be fully cooked. Steaks, chops and solid pieces of meat can be eaten rare.
- Store all leftovers in the refrigerator and not on the kitchen bench and use refrigerated leftovers within 2 to 3 days.
- Your Christmas ham will keep several weeks with proper handling by removing it from its plastic wrap, covering with clean cloth soaked in water and vinegar so

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it doesn't dry out, following any instructions on the packaging and storing it in the fridge below 5 degrees Celsius.

Finally Johanne Fudge advises, "One of the simplest ways to prevent food poisoning is to make sure that any one who handles food washes their hands thoroughly with soap and warm water before preparing foods and between handling raw meat or raw chicken."

— End —

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