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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Holiday Food Safety
November 27, 2023

It's the most wonderful time of the year! The holidays bring tidings of good cheer which may include visiting with family and friends, gift giving, and of course eating. Keep the holidays foodborne illness free by following these four steps for safe food preparation.

- **Clean.** Wash hands, utensils, and counter tops to avoid spreading bacteria when preparing food.
- **Separate.** Bacteria can be spread through cross-contamination. Use different cutting boards for meat, poultry, seafood, and vegetables.
- **Cook.** Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness. Use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked meat, poultry, and egg dishes. Follow these internal temperature guidelines when cooking meats.
 - Roasts and steaks cooked to 145° F.
 - Chicken and Turkey cooked to 165° F.
 - Ground meat (hamburgers) cooked to 155° F.
 - Seafood cooked to 145° F.
 - Cook eggs until they are white and firm, not runny. Don't use recipes requiring eggs to be left raw or partially cooked.
 - When microwaving, be sure to rotate the dish once or twice while cooking if there is no turntable. Bacteria can survive in cold spots in food.
 - Heat leftovers to 165° F and make sure leftover sauces, soups, and gravies are brought to a boil when reheating.
- **Chill.** Keeping your refrigerator at a constant temperature of 40° F or less is one of the most effective ways to reduce foodborne illness. Refrigerate foods quickly as cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Cold air must circulate in your refrigerator to help keep food safe, so do not overstuff the refrigerator.

Keeping your family safe is easy if you follow the four steps of food preparation.

For more information contact the Taney County Health Department at 417-334-4544, visit our website at www.taneycohealth.org, or like our FaceBook, Instagram and Pinterest pages.

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As a leader in health, the Taney County Health Department serves Taney County residents and visitors in their pursuit of a healthy lifestyle and environment. The Taney County Health Department's mission is to create a healthy and safe community for people to live, work, and play, today and in the future. Caring, serving, and protecting Taney County since 1961. Please visit our website www.taneycohealth.org to learn more about our services.