Stanislaus SC County
Striving to be the Best

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DON'T INVITE BACTERIA TO YOUR HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Stanislaus County-*Dept of Environmental Resources Stresses The Importance Of Keeping Food Safe This Holiday Season.*

When celebrating the holidays, be sure to keep an eye out for an uninvited guest - BACTERIA, that can cause foodborne illness. As people invite friends and family over for a holiday feast, it is important to *"Fight BAC!"* and practice safe food handling techniques when entertaining during the holiday season.

"Dinner parties and buffets are always very popular around the holidays," says Kit L. McClurg, Senior Environmental Health Specialist. "Foods that are left out for long periods can be an ideal setting for bacteria to multiply. During this busy time of year, people must remember to take special precautions to keep food safe."

There are four basic food safety steps to help reduce the risk of foodborne illness:

> CLEAN, **wash hands and surfaces often**;
>
> SEPARATE, **don't cross-contaminate**;
>
> COOK, **cook to proper temperatures;** and
>
> CHILL, **refrigerate promptly.**

When preparing buffets and party platters, be sure to practice these steps along with the following tips for a safe and bacteria-free holiday festivity:

- Always wash your hands with warm water and soap before and after handling food.

- Clean up kitchen surfaces with a clean cloth or paper towels.

- Always serve food on clean plates - never put cooked food on plates that previously held raw meat, poultry or seafood.

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- Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood away from fruits and vegetables so juices will not cross-contaminate foods.

- Cook foods thoroughly to safe internal temperatures as measured with a food thermometer. (Roast beef to 145°F for medium rare and 160°F for medium; poultry to a minimum of 165°F; ground meats to 160°F and ground poultry to 165°F).

- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Hot foods can be kept hot in chafing dishes, crock pots and warming trays and should be kept at 135°F or warmer. Cold foods can be kept cold by placing dishes in bowls of ice on serving tables and should be 41°F or colder.

- Arrange and serve food on several small platters rather than one large tray. Replace empty platters rather than adding fresh food to a dish that has already been used.

- Don't let foods sit at room temperature for more than 2 hours. Keep track of how long foods have been sitting on the buffet table and discard anything left out for 2 hours or more.

- Promptly refrigerate and store all leftovers in shallow containers so food will chill quicker. Most cooked dishes can keep for up to 3-4 days in the refrigerator. Reheat thoroughly to 165°F when food is hot and steaming.

See the attached brochure for more information on practicing safe food handling and fighting foodborne bacteria during the holiday season. You can also visit www.fightbac.org or The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Meat and Poultry Hotline at 888-MPHotline (888-674-6854), www.fsis.usda.gov. Local assistance is available by calling the Department of Environmental Resources at (209) 525-6700 Monday thru Friday 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

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Be a BAC Fighter

Make the meals and snacks from your kitchen as safe as possible. **CLEAN:** wash hands and surfaces often; **SEPARATE:** don't cross-contaminate; **COOK:** to proper temperatures, and **CHILL:** refrigerate promptly. Be a BAC Fighter and *Fight BAC!*®

For More Information about Safe Food Handling and Preparation

USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline
1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854);
TTY 1-800-256-7072

www.foodsafety.gov

To locate food safety educators in your state or community:

Cooperative Extension Service, local offices:
www.csrees.usda.gov/Extension/index.html

Food and Drug Administration Public Affairs Specialists:
www.fda.gov/ora/fed_state/dfsr_activities/dfsr_pas.html

See *www.fightbac.org* for free brochures, fact sheets, stickers, and other great stuff!

**Sign up to be a BACFighter at www.fightbac.org**

Apply the heat... and Fight BAC!®

Cooking food to the proper temperature kills harmful bacteria. So *Fight BAC!*® by thoroughly cooking your food as follows:

SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURES *as measured with a food thermometer*	
	Internal temperature
Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures	
Beef, Pork, Veal, Lamb	160°F
Turkey, Chicken	165°F
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb	
Medium Rare	145°F
Medium	160°F
Well Done	170°F
Poultry	
Chicken & Turkey, whole	165°F
Poultry parts	165°F
Duck & Goose	165°F
Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	165°F
Fresh Pork	
Medium	160°F
Well Done	170°F
Ham	
Fresh (raw)	160°F
Pre-cooked (to reheat)	140°F
Eggs & Egg Dishes	
Eggs	Cook until yolk & white are firm
Egg dishes	160°F
Seafood	
Fin Fish	145°F
	or flesh is opaque & separates easily with fork
Shrimp, Lobster & Crabs	flesh pearly & opaque
Clams, Oysters & Mussels	Shells open during cooking
Scallops	milky white or opaque & firm
Leftovers & Casseroles	165°F

2005 Partnership for Food Safety Education
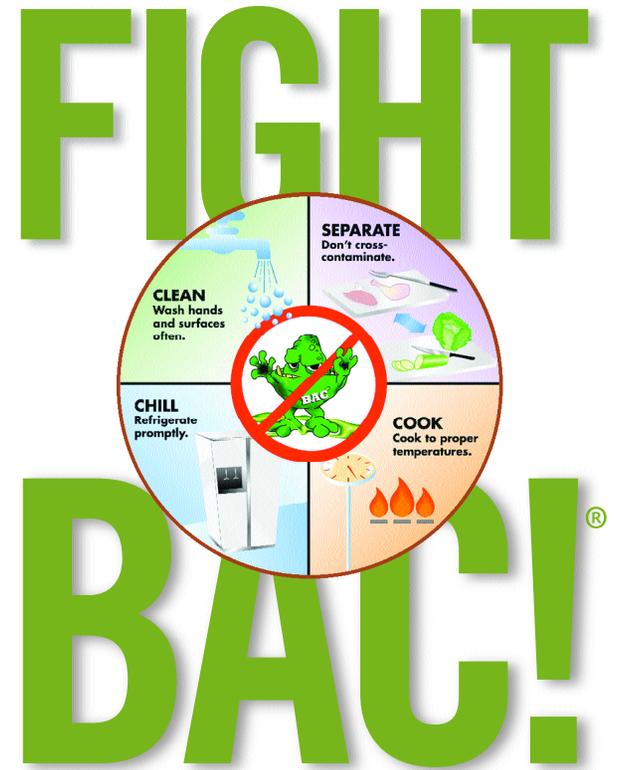
FIGHT BAC!®

FIGHT FOODBORNE BACTERIA

Four Simple Steps to
Food Safety

www.fightbac.org

BAC (foodborne bacteria) could make you and those you care about sick. In fact, even though you can't see BAC—or smell him, or feel him—he and millions more like him may have already invaded the food you eat. But you have the power to *Fight BAC!®*.

Foodborne illness can strike anyone. Some people are at a higher risk for developing foodborne illness, including pregnant women, young children, older adults and people with weakened immune systems. For these people the following four simple steps are critically important:

CLEAN: *Wash hands and surfaces often*

Bacteria can be spread throughout the kitchen and get onto hands, cutting boards, utensils, counter tops and food. To *Fight BAC!®*, always:

- Wash your hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food and after using the bathroom, changing diapers and handling pets.
- Wash your cutting boards, dishes, utensils and counter tops with hot soapy water after preparing each food item and before you go on to the next food.
- Consider using paper towels to clean up kitchen surfaces. If you use cloth towels wash them often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.
- Rinse fresh fruits and vegetables under running tap water, including those with skins and rinds that are not eaten.
- Rub firm-skin fruits and vegetables under running tap water or scrub with a clean vegetable brush while rinsing with running tap water.
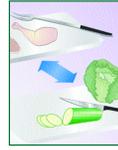
SEPARATE: *Don't cross-contaminate*

Cross-contamination is how bacteria can be spread. When handling raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs, keep these foods and their juices away from ready-to-eat foods. Always start with a clean scene— wash hands with warm water and soap. Wash cutting boards, dishes, countertops and utensils with hot soapy water.

- Separate raw meat, poultry, seafood and eggs from other foods in your grocery shopping cart, grocery bags and in your refrigerator.
- Use one cutting board for fresh produce and a separate one for raw meat, poultry and seafood.
- Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, seafood or eggs.
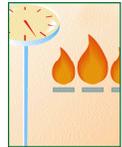
COOK: *Cook to proper temperatures*

Food is safely cooked when it reaches a high enough internal temperature to kill the harmful bacteria that cause illness. Refer to the chart on the back of this brochure for the proper internal temperatures.

- Use a food thermometer to measure the internal temperature of cooked foods. Make sure that meat, poultry, egg dishes, casseroles and other foods are cooked to the internal temperature shown in the chart on the back of this brochure.
- Cook ground meat or ground poultry until it reaches a safe internal temperature. Color is not a reliable indicator of doneness.
- Cook eggs until the yolk and white are firm. Only use recipes in which eggs are cooked or heated thoroughly.
- When cooking in a microwave oven, cover food, stir and rotate for even cooking. Food is done when it reaches

the internal temperature shown on the back of this brochure.
- Bring sauces, soups and gravy to a boil when reheating.

CHILL: *Refrigerate promptly*

Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures slow the growth of harmful bacteria. Do not over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to help keep food safe. Keeping a constant refrigerator temperature of 40°F or below is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. Use an appliance thermometer to be sure the temperature is consistently 40°F or below. The freezer temperature should be 0°F or below.

- Refrigerate or freeze meat, poultry, eggs and other perishables as soon as you get them home from the store.
- Never let raw meat, poultry, eggs, cooked food or cut fresh fruits or vegetables sit at room temperature more than two hours before putting them in the refrigerator or freezer (one hour when the temperature is above 90°F).
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Food must be kept at a safe temperature during thawing. There are three safe ways to defrost food: in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in the microwave. Food thawed in cold water or in the microwave should be cooked immediately.
- Always marinate food in the refrigerator.
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.
- Use or discard refrigerated food on a regular basis. Check USDA cold storage information at *www.fightbac.org* for optimum storage times.