

12 November 2012

DOH-FDA Health Advisory
No. 2012 - 04

SUBJECT: HOLIDAY FOOD SAFETY TIPS

To keep you safe during the holiday season the FDA is issuing this advisory to remind the consuming public to exercise food safety habits to avoid undue illnesses caused by food with microbiological, chemical and physical contamination. During the holiday rush, consumers must always remember to be very careful in the selection, purchase, preparation, handling and storage of food. Typical symptoms of foodborne illnesses are vomiting, diarrhea and flu like symptoms – a few hours or days after consumption of unsafe food; and/or could be severe like hepatitis A, gastroenteritis, cholera, typhoid fever, amoebiasis as well as poisoning from toxic chemical substances.

Practical Food Safety Tips can help prevent foodborne illnesses:

- Buy from reputable food sources.
- Check the physical condition of the product. Avoid buying dented, bulging, or deformed canned foods.
- Read food labels including ingredients and allergens declaration. If sensitive or concerned about certain food ingredients, avoid those foods. Look for the English translation of the label information on imported food products.
- Check open date marking (expiry date/consume before date or best before date) for perishable products.
- Double check on Holiday Promo items (BUY 1/TAKE 1 and FREEBIES), which should still be of quality and within safety guarantee period.
- Avoid unlabelled repacked food that swarms around claiming that they are the same as or made by the manufacturers of known brands of food products. Repacked food must also bear proper label information and must be prepared in a hygienic facility and manner.
- Buy fruits and vegetables that are fresh. Wash them thoroughly with running water before cooking or eating.

- Wash your hands thoroughly before, during, after food preparation, after using the toilet, and as often as necessary.
- Prepare food only in clean work area using clean containers, utensils, cutting boards, sponges, etc.
- If STREET FOOD is tempting during the Holidays, try to investigate first if it was prepared, cooked and handled in hygienic manner before indulging. If in doubt, do not indulge.
- Cook food in proper temperature.
- Keep food out of the danger zone temperature range (5°C to 60°C) for more than 2 hours. Remember the Food Golden Rule: KEEP HOT FOOD HOT AND COLD FOOD COLD.
- Keep food covered to prevent insects from coming in, which could result to microbiological contamination.
- Refrigerate and/or properly store leftovers promptly.
- IMMEDIATELY discard spoiled and suspected to be spoiled food. Re-heating or re-cooking them will not help.
- Eat and drink alcohol moderately.

For information and proper guidance.


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