



# WARREN COUNTY COMBINED HEALTH DISTRICT

NO. 279  
NOVEMBER 2008

Duane Stansbury, R.S., M.P.H.  
Health Commissioner

## NEWS & INFORMATION

### Safe Holiday Food Handling

As the holidays approach we often think of large home-cooked meals that become the center of attraction for most family gatherings. To keep food and meals safe, please follow these tips:

**Clean:** Wash hands and counter surfaces often. Bacteria can spread throughout the kitchen quickly. Cutting boards, knives, sponges, and counter tops need special attention.

**Separate:** Don't cross-contaminate by allowing bacteria from one food spread to another food. Pay particular attention to raw poultry items contaminating ready to eat foods.

**Cook:** Proper cooking temperatures are important. Make sure the turkey and the stuffing reach at least 165 degrees F. to kill off bacteria that can cause illness. Use that meat thermometer.

**Chill:** Refrigerate promptly. This will keep bacteria from growing and make those left-overs last longer.

If you have any questions contact one of our food safety specialists with the Warren County Combined Health District at 513-695-1220 or 937-425-1220, 513-925-1220, 513-261-1220.

### SAFE THAWING OF YOUR TURKEY

Immediately after purchasing, take the frozen turkey home and store it in the freezer. When it is time to begin thawing the turkey for your holiday dinner, **it should not be thawed on the back porch, in the car trunk, in the basement, or on the kitchen counter.** A frozen turkey is safe indefinitely while frozen, but as soon as it begins to defrost any bacteria that may have been present when the turkey was frozen can begin to grow again. Improper thawing results in the center of the turkey still being frozen while the outside of the turkey reaches temperatures that are dangerous because of the bacterial growth that can occur. There are three

safe ways to thaw a frozen turkey:

**1. In the refrigerator.** When thawing a turkey in the fridge you will



need to plan ahead. For every 5 lbs of turkey, allow 24 hours of thawing time in a refrigerator at 41 degrees F. Following are examples of safe thawing times:

- 8-12 lbs-----1-2 days
- 12-16 lbs-----2-3 days
- 16-20 lbs-----3-4 days
- 20-24 lbs-----4-5 days

**2. In the Microwave.**

Follow the manufacturer's recommendation for thawing in the microwave and plan on

cooking the turkey immediately after thawing in this manner.

**3. Thawing in Cold Water.** Allow about 30 minutes per pound when thawing a turkey in cold water.

Keep the turkey in its leak proof packaging and submerge the turkey in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes until the turkey is thawed. Typical thawing times using this method would be:

- 8-12 lbs-----4-6 hrs
- 12-16 lbs-----6-8 hrs
- 16-20 lbs-----8-10 hrs
- 20-24 lbs-----10-12 hrs

**Have a safe and healthy holiday dinner.**

### IS MY CHILD TOO SICK FOR SCHOOL?

What do you do if your child wakes up complaining of a stuffy head, sore throat or just feels bad? Do you send them on to school anyway or do you keep them home? The following is a list of conditions that is offered as a guideline for parents to use in deciding when to keep their children home:



- Undiagnosed fever or rash
- Chicken pox

- Conjunctivitis (pink eye)
- Head lice
- Untreated strep throat
- Is not well enough to participate in class

It is recommended that children with a low-grade fever not be given a dose of medicine and sent off to school. The medicine is only a temporary fix and is only covering up the problem. For more information call the Child

Health Clinic at 513-695-1468, 513-925-1468, 513-261-1468 or 937-425-1468.

Daylight Savings Time Ends

**NOVEMBER 2nd**

Don't forget to change your clocks back one hour.

## CHILDREN AND SMALL PETS

Young children (age 5 and under) should not keep small pets such as hedgehogs, hamsters, baby chicks, lizards and turtles because of the potential for the children to contract diseases from handling these small animals. Young children are vulnerable because of their developing immune systems plus they often put their hands in their mouths. Small exotic pets are known to carry dangerous and sometimes deadly germs, a problem that is heightened because exotic pets may be more prone than

cats and dogs to bite, scratch or claw. It has been estimated that about 11% of all salmonella illnesses in children are thought to stem from contact with lizards, turtles, and other reptiles. Hamsters can also carry this germ, which causes severe diarrhea, fever, and stomach cramps. Hedgehogs have gained much popularity as pocket pets, but they can be dangerous because their



quills can penetrate skin and have been known to carry a germ that can cause fever, stomach pain and a rash. With supervision and precautions like hand-washing, contact between children and pets is a good thing. It is recommended that parents consider not bringing home a pocket pet until children are older and can take some responsibility for washing their hands after handling the animal.

## SHOPPING SMART MAY IMPROVE YOUR HEALTH

In this day of busy hectic schedules, not very many people like to take the time, while grocery shopping, to do any more than just run into the store and grab what they need for the meal they are planning for that evening. It would be very beneficial to make out dinner menus for a week at a time. You can get the whole family involved in this also. Ask the children or your spouse their preferences for a meal and give them a specific day that they know will be their turn to choose what they eat that day. With planning your meals, you can plan

healthier meals. It takes more time if you read the labels on food that you plan to buy, but it will really benefit everyone in the family if you do this. Here are a few suggestions to follow:

1. Always read the food labels. Even foods that seem similar can have very different nutritional values, fat content, and calories.
2. Before you make any dietary changes, you probably need to talk to your doctor to find out your specific nutritional needs.
3. Stay away from sodium, sugars, caffeine, cholesterol, and nitrates.

1. Don't forget about fiber. Whole grains, fruits, legumes, and other vegetables are high in fiber.
2. Never shop on an empty stomach. You may be inclined to buy more food at this time, especially junk food that you would not normally buy if you were not hungry.

For additional nutritional information please contact Kathy Dickey, Nutritionist at the Warren County Combined Health District at 513-695-1477, 937-746-1477, 513-261-1477, 513-925-1477, 937-425-1477.

## HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE

High blood pressure is a major risk factor for heart and kidney disease. Not everyone knows that they have high blood pressure. In fact, only one third of adults who have high blood pressure even realize they have it. If you have high blood pressure, your heart is having a difficult time pumping blood through the blood vessels. High blood pressure can be prevented with proper education. The following are ways to help maintain a healthy blood pressure:

- Maintain a healthy weight
- Be physically active
- Reduce stress
- No smoking
- Reduce alcohol
- Eating foods low in salt

The easiest way to find out if you have high blood pressure is to monitor it on a regular basis. The Warren County Combined Health District offers walk-in blood pressure checks at no cost Monday through Friday 7:30 a.m. 4:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please call the nursing division at 513-695-1229, 513-261-1229, 513-925-1229, or 937-425-1229.



*The offices of the Warren County Combined Health District will be closed Tuesday, November 11th in observance of Veteran's Day. The offices will also be closed Thursday, November 27th and Friday, November 28th for the Thanksgiving holiday.*