



WARREN COUNTY COMBINED HEALTH DISTRICT

Prevent - Promote - Protect



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NEWS & INFORMATION

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Health Commissioner

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 that food and meals safe, please follow these safe food handling 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 to 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° 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 please contact one of our food safety specialists with the Warren County Combined Health District at 513-695-1220, 513-261-1220, 513-925-1220 or 937-425-1220.

H1N1 VACCINE UPDATE

The Warren County Combined Health District has received a very limited amount of H1N1 vaccine. The health department began offering vaccine to individuals who are in the key priority groups identified by the Centers for Disease Control.

Those individuals are pregnant women, people 6 months to 24 years of

age, healthcare and EMS workers, caretakers of children younger than 6



months of age, children with chronic health problems and adults 24 years – 65 years of age with chronic health conditions. The health department has

held several community clinics for those priority groups and have been coordinating with the

schools in Warren County in an effort to provide vaccine to the students. The health department plans to continue to offer community and school based clinics as more vaccine arrives. It is anticipated that vaccine will be accessible to everyone who wants to be vaccinated when more vaccine is available and those in the high risk groups have been vaccinated. For more information on clinic dates and times please check our website at www.co.warren.oh.us/health

THAWING THE HOLIDAY TURKEY SAFELY

Immediately after purchasing, take that frozen turkey home and store it in the freezer. When it comes time to begin thawing that 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 that 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° F. The 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.

THE TRUTH ABOUT MRSA

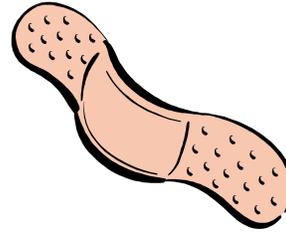
The truth about Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) may surprise you. MRSA is a type of bacteria that causes skin and other kinds of infections. Sometimes called “the superbug”, MRSA is resistant to certain antibiotics, but several antibiotics still work. And many times, antibiotics aren’t even needed—doctors are often able to treat MRSA skin infections by simply draining them. Because skin infections caused by MRSA are increasing, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) launched a new campaign to educate families about MRSA. Although most of these skin infections are mild, some infections may become life-threatening. The following are a few simple steps you can take to protect yourself and your family from MRSA skin infections.

Step 1: Know the signs and symptoms of MRSA and get treatment early. A

staph infection, including one caused by MRSA, usually appears as a bump or infected area on the skin that may be red, swollen, painful, warm to the touch or full of pus or other drainage. It is especially important to contact your health care provider if these signs and symptoms are accompanied by a fever.

Step 2: Keep cuts and scrapes clean and covered. Keeping cuts and scrapes covered will help prevent spreading bacteria to others. If you think the area is infected, contact your health-care provider and follow their instructions about proper care of the infection. Be sure to discard used bandages in the trash.

Step 3: Encourage good hygiene such as cleaning hands regularly. Bacteria and other germs are often spread from person

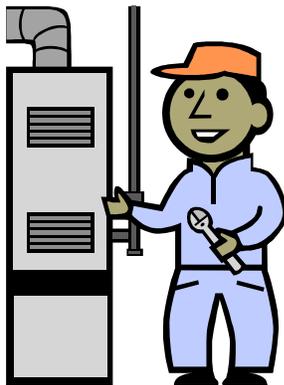


to person by direct contact—mostly by our hands. Clean your hands frequently with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub, especially after changing a bandage or touching infected skin.

Step 4: Discourage sharing of personal items such as towels and razors. Avoid sharing personal items such as towels, washcloths, razors, or clothing that may have had contact with infected skin or soiled bandages. Wash sheets, towels, and clothes with water and laundry detergent. Water temperatures for household laundry depend on the type of fiber or fabric of the clothing. In general, wash and dry in the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label. Use a clothes dryer to dry clothes completely. For more information visit www.cdc.gov/MRSA.

CARBON MONOXIDE

Carbon Monoxide is called the “silent killer”. It is difficult to detect, as it is colorless, odorless, and tasteless. Because you can’t see, taste or smell it, carbon monoxide can kill you before you know it is there. With the winter season just around the corner, experts are warning residents to get their furnaces inspected by a professional. The most common reason for carbon monoxide poisoning from household furnaces is lack of maintenance. Any fuel burning appliance, vehicle, tool or other device has the potential to produce dangerous levels of carbon monoxide gas. Examples of carbon monoxide producing devices commonly in use in or around your home include fuel fired furnaces (non electric), gas water heaters, fireplaces and wood stoves, gas stoves, gas dry-



ers, charcoal grills, lawnmowers, snow blowers and other yard equipment (non electric), and automobiles.

There are carbon monoxide detectors available that are easy to install in your home. Most plug right into an electric outlet or use batteries. A detector will warn you in an event that there is a carbon monoxide leak in your home. Symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning include:

- Flu-like symptoms
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Weakness or clumsiness
- Blurry vision
- Fatigue
- Loss of consciousness

If you have a carbon monoxide detector and the alarm goes off remember the following:

- Treat all alarms as the real thing.*
- Leave the house immediately.*

-*Leave the door open on the way out.*

-*Call the fire department from a neighbor’s house.*

-*Get medical help.*

-*Do not return to the house until inspected by a professional.*

The offices of the Warren County Combined Health District will be closed Thursday, November 26th and Friday, November 27th for the Thanksgiving holiday. Have a happy and safe holiday.



The offices of the Warren County Combined Health District will be closed on Wednesday, November 11th in observance of Veteran’s Day.

The *WCCHD News and Information* is a monthly publication that is available free of charge. Subscriptions are available by mail or email. If you would like to be added to our mailing list please contact Alicia Habermehl, 513-695-2475 or alicia.habermehl@co.warren.oh.us.