



Health! Canada

Happy healthy holidays!



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Let's talk turkey



Your turkey dinner was scrumptious. But anytime from a few hours to a few days later, you're hit by cramps and diarrhea. What's happening?

It's likely food poisoning, also known as foodborne illness. Thousands of Canadians each year get foodborne illness after eating food contaminated by *Salmonella* and other types of bacteria.

The heat of cooking usually kills *Salmonella* bacteria, but improper techniques of storage, preparation or cooking of turkey can put you and your family at risk.

Keep food safe

It's not possible to tell by looking, smelling or tasting whether food has been contaminated with bacteria, so treat all turkey and other raw meats as though they are.

When you bring turkey home from the store, refrigerate or freeze it immediately. Refrigerated fresh turkey should be used within two or three days. Frozen turkey can be safely thawed in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave oven.

Drippings produced during thawing should be considered contaminated. The surfaces the drippings have touched should be thoroughly cleaned with soapy water and **disinfected with dilute household bleach**. Wash hands well and often when handling turkey. Avoid cross-contamination of other foods by keeping your utensils, counter tops and cutting boards clean.

Stuffing is a great place for bacteria to grow because it is moist and tends to heat and cool slowly. It is better to cook

the stuffing separately, preferably in an oven dish or on top of the stove, because stuffing insulates the body cavity from the oven heat and *Salmonella* may survive cooking. Stuffing should achieve a minimal internal temperature of 74°C (165°F).

The golden rules

To keep your holiday food safe, remember the golden rules of food handling.

1. Chill ... refrigerate promptly

- Bacteria grow rapidly at room temperature, so don't leave turkey or other foods that should be refrigerated sitting on the kitchen counter or in the car.
- Keep unfrozen raw turkey and other raw meats in the refrigerator until you are ready to handle and cook them.
- Foods left out of the refrigerator more than two hours should be discarded.

2. Clean ... wash hands and surfaces often

- Wash your hands before and after handling raw turkey and meat.
- Thoroughly wash dishes, cutting boards, counters and utensils with hot water and detergent. Disinfect them using dilute chlorine bleach (1 tsp. bleach in 3 cups of water), rinse with fresh water, and dry. You can also clean the cutting boards and utensils in the dishwasher.
- Dish cloths used for wiping utensils, pots and pans can harbour many bacteria, and should be changed daily.

- Any utensils which have come into contact with potentially hazardous foods or contaminated dish rags should be thoroughly washed before being used on cooked or ready-to-eat foods.

3. Separate ... don't cross-contaminate

- Take care that juices and marinades from meat and turkey do not drip onto other foods. Keep raw meats and turkey separate from cooked meats and cold cuts in the refrigerator.
- Never put cooked turkey on unwashed plates which previously held raw foods of animal origin or unwashed fruits and vegetables.

4. Cook ... to proper temperature

- Cook birds until the internal temperature in the breast or thigh is 85°C (185°F). Turkey is likely to be done when the meat is tender to a fork or the meat throughout is no longer pink.
- Cooked foods should be eaten hot. Foods left to cool at room temperature may encourage the rapid growth of bacteria.
- Never eat raw or undercooked turkey.
- Use up refrigerated leftovers within two to three days.
- Foods should be reheated until they are piping hot throughout before serving.

Find out more online via magazine.health-canada.net

After the holiday feast

Get back on track



Next year it will be different, you promise yourself, as you take the last bite of pudding, and bring the curtain down on another big holiday meal.

It's a familiar feeling for many of us at holiday time. Fortunately, there are a number of ways to avoid overindulgence — and they don't even need a New Year's resolution!

Holiday fare is typically high in fat. This year, take a tip or two from [Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating](#) by choosing healthier alternatives in the four food groups:

- **Grain products:** Whole grain and enriched products.
- **Vegetables and fruit:** Dark green and orange vegetables, and orange fruit.
- **Milk products:** Lower-fat milk products such as skim milk.
- **Meat and alternatives:** Leaner meats, poultry and fish, as well as dried peas, beans and lentils.

Try the Food Guide's [healthy eating scorecard](#) to keep track of your eating patterns.

The **VITALITY** program has tips and tools on healthy living, and on achieving and maintaining a healthy weight. Try the **VITALITY quiz** on healthy eating, active living, and positive self-image.

Get a move on

Staying physically active will certainly help burn off the effects of holiday eating. It's easier than you think, too: according to the [Physical Activity Guide](#), just one hour of physical activity per day will pay off in health benefits.

You don't have to do the hour all at once, either. You can add physical activities, 10 minutes at a time, into your daily lifestyle. Here are a few examples:

- Start your day with 10 minutes of stretching or a short walk.
- Park the car a 10-minute walk from work or the shopping centre, or get off the bus a few stops early and walk.

- Dance to your favourite music for 10 minutes a day.
- Take an evening fitness class, and encourage your friends to do the same.
- At work, pretend the elevator is out of service and take the stairs; replace your coffee break with a walk; take stretch breaks at the computer or workbench.
- See how many 10-minute walking or wheeling routes you can find in your neighbourhood.
- Arrange to meet some friends for a walk every day.

Find out more online via magazine.health-canada.net

Safety

TOPS THE LIST



Makin' your holiday list and checkin' it twice? Put safety near the top.

When you're out shopping — especially at the last minute! — take extra care on the roads. Everyone else is a little rushed and may not be paying as much attention as they normally would. Be especially cautious if there's snow and ice to contend with.

The holidays are a favourite time for car break-ins. Keep your presents out of sight in your car's trunk, and park in an open, well-lit area. Never leave children unattended in your car, even if you're running a quick errand.

If you plan on having a real Christmas tree, here are a few hints to keep in mind.

Buying Check for freshness: hold a branch about 15 cm (six inches) from the end and pull your hand toward you, letting the branch slip through your fingers. Only a few needles should come off in your hand.

Storing If it will be several days before you take your tree inside for decorating, store it outdoors or on a cool porch or patio. Place the tree in an area protected from the wind and sun to help retain its moisture.

Installing Cut the trunk about 2 cm (one inch) from the bottom and place the tree in a water-filled container. Remember that trees are thirsty: they may drink up to four litres of water per day, so be sure to check daily and supply fresh water as needed. Place the tree away from fireplaces, radiators, television sets and other sources of heat. Turn off the Christmas tree lights before you leave the house or go to bed.

Decorating Make sure your Christmas lights are certified by the

Canadian Standards Association (CSA).

Inspect the lights before use, looking for cracked bulbs and frayed, broken or exposed wires.

Discard faulty strings and buy new ones.

Remember that indoor light strings should not be used outdoors because they lack weatherproof connections. Outdoor strings burn too hot for indoor use.

Make sure decorations are flame-retardant, non-combustible, and non-conductive. If there are young children or pets in your home, avoid decorations that are very small or breakable. NEVER use lighted candles on the tree. In fact, **be careful with candles** in general.

Removing Remove the tree right after Christmas, or as soon as the needles start to fall. Be sure to dispose of the tree according to local regulations: many municipalities have recycling programs.

Let's go!

If the kids are itching to use their new toboggan or ice skates, keep these safety tips in mind.

Tobogganing

- Make sure your children wear a helmet.
- Choose a hill that is away from roads and parking lots. There should be no rocks, trees, fences or other dangers in the path.

- Teach your children to slide down the middle of the hill, climb up the side and watch up the hill.

- Teach them to move out of the way quickly when they get to the bottom.

Skating

- On lakes or rivers, make sure the ice is smooth and at least 10 centimetres (four inches) thick. Never skate near open water.
- Children should skate in the same direction and at the same speed as the crowd. Skaters who cannot keep up with the crowd should move to the side.
- When playing hockey, wear a CSA-certified helmet. Replace hockey helmets at least every 5 years.

Warm and protected

- Keep children warm. Dress your children in layers. Make sure their heads and necks are covered by a hat and a neck warmer.
- On sunny days, have them wear sunglasses and put sun screen on their exposed skin.
- Check your children's equipment to make sure that it fits and is in good condition.

Find out more online via magazine.health-canada.net

Dealing with *stress*

The advertisements say it, the songs say it, the department stores say it: the holidays are “the most wonderful time of the year”.

Well, yes and no.

Even the most enthusiastic of us can be overwhelmed by the pressures of the season. Added to the other stressors in our lives (work, family, financial obligations), the holidays can trigger negative feelings and even depression.

Who hasn't struggled with cramming the many extra events of the holiday into an already crowded schedule? Before we know it, our buying habits, our eating and sleeping patterns, our relations with family and friends, and our performance at work can all be affected.

People dealing with mental illnesses, recent loss of loved ones, disease, loneliness and life-changing events are particularly at risk of seeing their problems worsen during the holidays. The same is true of people who face being reunited with dysfunctional families, or with indi-

viduals who have abused or victimized them in the past.

There's no magic cure for the negative feelings some of us may experience at this time of year, but there are ways of reducing their impact.

Plan ahead

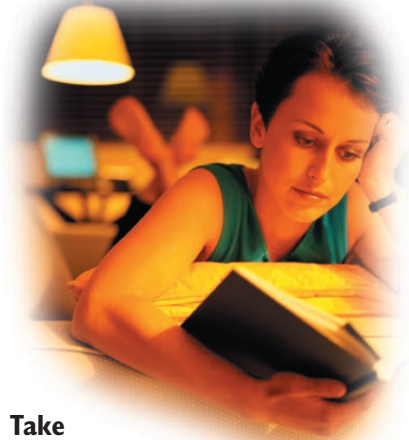
Try to do your gift shopping as far in advance as you can, to avoid the last-minute rush. If you're into baking goodies, get them done ahead of time and store them in the freezer. Make a task checklist: the most important at the top, the less urgent after — and forget the others, even if it would be “nice” to tackle them. At work, try to schedule less demanding tasks.

Get support

Whether you need to stay sober, stick to healthy eating habits, or make sure you're not alone, don't be shy about calling on family, friends or counsellors to lend a hand. Take advantage of confidential employee assistance programs, offered by many employers.

Give support

Answer the call if someone needs help. Volunteer at a church, a community centre, a seniors' home, a hospital, a soup kitchen.



Take care of yourself

Take the dog for a quiet walk. Read the book you've always wanted to. Finish a renovation project in your house. Stare out the window. Take a nap. Join a yoga or exercise class. Phone someone you haven't talked to in a while.

Stay in the know

Stay alert to the [signs of depression](#). Learn more about [family violence and abuse, alcohol and other drugs](#). Help your kids maintain [healthy lifestyles](#). Get the latest on [healthy eating and physical activity](#).

Let go

Don't be hard on yourself if you can't do it all.

Find out more online via magazine.health-canada.net



To your **health**

Alcohol and the holiday season



Raising a glass of cheer with family, friends and colleagues is a tradition for many at the holiday season.

Raising too many glasses, or letting others do the same, could spell trouble.

Alcohol is a drug. It is a depressant, which means it slows down your body's central nervous system. The more you drink, the more your concentration, speech, balance, vision, coordination and judgment deteriorate. Combine alcohol with the stress of the holiday season, and the mix can be devastating.

Long-term heavy drinking can cause many health problems, such as liver damage, heart disease, stomach ulcers, blood vessel disorders, impotence in men, menstrual irregularities in women, and even cancer. Excessive drinking can also lead to serious professional, family, financial and legal problems. Of the estimated 3,000 deaths per year from motor vehicle crashes in Canada, about 40 per cent are attributed to alcohol.

How much alcohol is enough for you? It depends on how much you usually drink, how quickly you drink, your

mood, your body size, the amount you have eaten, and your past experiences with drinking, among other things.

Canada's Drug Strategy, supported by Health Canada, describes moderate alcohol consumption for most adults as being no more than 1 drink a day and no more than 7 drinks a week. More than 4 drinks on any one occasion or more than 14 drinks in a week are considered a risk to health and safety.

You may be drinking too much if you:

- need to drink more to feel the same "high"
- are spending more and more on alcohol
- experience poor appetite, jumpiness, insomnia and sweating when not drinking
- have blackouts when drinking or can't remember drinking
- have bouts of confusion or memory loss.

Tips for responsible drinking

Go ahead, have fun, it's the holiday season. If you're enjoying a party with family, friends or co-workers, just remember to:

- limit your consumption. It's recommended that you space your drinks at least an hour apart.
- eat something beforehand. Eating after you've started to drink won't help.
- try alternating alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, or switch to non-alcoholic beverages at least an hour before you plan to go home.
- drink only if you want to. Don't feel obliged to accept a drink just because it's offered.
- leave the driving to a designated driver, or take a cab or bus.

If you throw a party, remember that you may be held legally responsible for injuries or damages that may result from the alcohol you serve. Here are 10 tips to make you the "host with the most responsibility":

1. Limit how much you drink yourself. You'll be better able to keep things under control.
2. Before the party, ask someone reliable to help you if problems crop up.
3. Provide alcohol-free drinks, such as coffee, tea, pop, fruit punch, juice and water. Serve non-alcoholic wines and cocktails.
4. Mix and serve drinks yourself or designate a bartender. Guests usually drink more when they serve themselves.
5. Serve food. Best bets are meats, vegetables, cheeses, and breads. Avoid salty, sweet or greasy foods, because they make people more thirsty.
6. Don't plan physical activities. People are more prone to injury or mishap after drinking.
7. Stop serving alcohol at least an hour before the party ends.
8. Don't rely on coffee to sober guests up. The liver processes about 14 millilitres of alcohol per hour, coffee or no coffee.
9. Encourage guests to name designated drivers, leave their cars at home, take public transport or cabs, or walk. Have cash and taxi company phone numbers ready.
10. Be prepared for overnight guests by having blankets and sleeping bags available.

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Newslinks

New nutrition labelling

Health Minister Allan Rock announced proposed changes for nutrition labelling recently. Nutrition labelling on pre-packaged foods will now be mandatory, have a consistent look, and include more nutrient information on calories, fat, vitamins and other content. "These new labels will help Canadians make more informed choices about the foods they eat," said Minister Rock.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (200g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 260	
% Daily Value	
Fat 13g	20%
Saturated Fat 3g + Trans Fat 2g	25%
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 660mg	28%
Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Fibre 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 4%	Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 15%	Iron 4%

Think ahead: healthy lawns

Health Minister Allan Rock announced recently that an [Action Plan for Urban Use Pesticides](#) has been developed through a partnership between Health Canada's [Pest Management Regulatory Agency](#) and the provincial and territorial governments. The Healthy Lawns Strategy will emphasize pest prevention and the use of reduced-risk products. Initiatives under this strategy will include the development of education materials and programs on healthy lawn practices, including a "[Healthy Lawns](#)" Web site.

Breast screening programs

Health Canada's first [biennial report](#) on organized breast screening programs across Canada is now available online. The report, using data from the [Canadian Breast Cancer Screening Database](#), recommends that Canadian women aged 50 to 69 should be offered and encouraged to participate in an early detection program every 2 years.

Recent health warnings and advisories

- [Blind and curtain cords](#) (Nov. 8, 2000)
- [Phenylpropanolamine \(PPA\)](#) A nasal decongestant found in non-prescription cough and cold, sinus and some allergy medications. (Nov. 6, 2000)
- [Certain disposable lighter brands](#) (Oct. 27, 2000)
- [Coloured non-prescription contact lenses](#) (Oct. 23, 2000)

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