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Date: November 21, 2016
To: Local Media
From: Lori DiPietro, Health Educator
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Please publish the attached article as soon as possible. If you have any questions, you may call me at the above number. Thank you.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Don't Let Foodborne Illness Ruin Your Thanksgiving Spirit

Did you know that every year, approximately 1 in 6 people suffer from foodborne illness? As you prepare for the Thanksgiving season, the Central Connecticut Health District is urging you to keep loved ones safe through safe food handling practices through four basic steps: clean, separate, cook, chill.

Clean: All surfaces, cutting boards, utensils, and dishes should be washed often with hot, soapy water. Hands should be washed for at least 20 seconds in hot, soapy water before, during, and after food preparation. This is especially important after preparing meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood, after using the bathroom, changing diapers, and after handling pets.

Separate: Different clean plates, pans, boards, and utensils should be used for raw and cooked meats. Cooked foods should never be placed on an unwashed plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, eggs, or seafood.

Cook: When foods are cooked at lower temperatures, they may not get warm enough to get out of the danger zone (between 40 degrees and 140 degrees), so bacteria may multiply rapidly and are not killed. Use a food thermometer to be sure the meat is cooked to the following internal temperatures: beef, ham, and pork, and turkey and poultry – 165 degrees. Do not cook if you are feeling ill with symptoms of vomiting or diarrhea, or if you have had these symptoms recently. Many food borne illnesses can be transmitted through a food handler, even if they have washed their hands without them knowing it.

If the meat is frozen, thaw it in the refrigerator or submerge it in a deep sink of cold water (in its original wrapper), changing the water every 30 minutes. Using a cold stuffing can make it more difficult for the turkey to reach the safe internal temperature of 165 degrees, so stuff the turkey loosely to allow even cooking

Chill: Be sure to wrap and store the left-over food in the refrigerator right away. When time to eat leftovers, stuffing and gravy can be refrigerated safely for 2 days, while cooked turkey and vegetables can be stored in the refrigerator for 4 days. If food is not refrigerated within the safe time limits, it should be thrown out.

For more information about foodborne illness and food safety, please contact the Central Connecticut Health District, serving Berlin, Newington, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield, at www.ccthd.org or by liking our Facebook page.