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DOH-Hillsborough Encourages a Healthy 2025 Holiday Season

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Hillsborough County, Fla. — The Florida Department of Health in Hillsborough County (DOH-Hillsborough) encourages residents and visitors to enjoy a healthy and safe holiday season by following the tips below.

Food Safety

- Thaw meat in the refrigerator or in a sink filled with cold water before cooking. The water needs to be changed every 30 minutes. Do not thaw it on the counter, as foodborne bacteria can quickly grow.
- Keep raw foods separate from cooked foods and wash your hands, utensils, and surfaces frequently to avoid cross contamination.
- Do not consume raw batter or dough that is made with flour or eggs to avoid harmful bacteria like [E. coli](#) and salmonella.
- Use a food thermometer to ensure foods are cooked to proper internal temperatures.
- Once the food is prepared, keep hot foods above 140 degrees Fahrenheit and cold items below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Hot and cold leftovers need to be refrigerated within two hours of being served.
- Keep hot foods insulated and place cold foods on ice or gel packs while in the car.

Physical Health and Mental Well-Being

The holiday season often comes with busier schedules, making it extra important to take care of [mental well-being](#) and physical health.

- Find ways to be [physically active](#). This can be as simple as walking for an extra 10 minutes during your holiday shopping.
- Schedule time to unwind and take part in activities you enjoy.
- Use [healthy ingredients](#) in your traditional dishes by opting for less sodium and healthy fats.
- Reach out and check in on one another. The holidays can heighten feelings of loss or grief. Connecting with your community can help, especially for those struggling.

Decoration and Travel Safety

- Avoid placing poisonous plants in areas accessible to children and pets. Holly berries, mistletoe, amaryllis, and English ivy are a few poisonous plants that are popular around the holidays.
- Secure and cover extension cords to prevent trips and falls.
- Be cautious when using spray-on artificial snow. Inhalation can cause irritation to the lungs.

- Make sure car seats are properly installed and children are in the right seats for their age and size. Set up a [car seat safety inspection](#).
- Be well rested before getting behind the wheel.
- Designate a sober driver.

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