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HOLIDAY GUIDE

CHRISTMAS WHIMSY:

Construction workers working on the one of the new domes of St. Elias Ukrainian Church on Heritage Rd. got into the Christmas spirit by placing a Christmas tree on top. The church, which was destroyed by fire in 2014, will be rebuilt in time for summer services in 2016.

Submitted photo



Cook it safe so your holiday memories are merry and bright

'Tis the season to be jolly. So don't let food poisoning interfere with your festive cheer. Ontario's Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health is reminding all Ontarians to make sure they follow safe food practices this holiday season.

"Food poisoning happens when people eat food that is contaminated with harmful bacteria, viruses or parasites. Every year, thousands of Ontarians suffer from food poisoning due to improper food handling in their own homes. Small children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with existing health conditions are most at risk. That's why it's important to wash hands and surfaces, and eat foods that are properly washed, stored and cooked this holiday season," said Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Acting Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Food poisoning can vary from minor to severe, with symptoms appearing from hours to weeks after eating contaminated food. Symptoms may include nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, fever, stomach cramps and stomach pain.

Whether it's baking goodies for friends or cooking entrées for family, Dr. Williams suggests keeping these four safe food-handling tips top of mind:

Clean—your hands, surfaces and equipment

and do it well. Bacteria can get onto hands, cutting boards, knives, dishcloths, countertops and the food itself

Separate—meat, poultry and fish from ready-to-eat foods during storage and preparation to prevent the spread of bacteria

Cook—your food thoroughly, especially meat and poultry, such as turkey

Chill—your foods to four degrees Celsius or lower within two hours of purchase or preparation, especially for high-risk foods like meat, poultry, fish, eggs and dairy products.

Other ways to be food safe when entertaining over the holidays include:

- If preparing food for a party, never defrost food on the kitchen counter before cooking. Thaw meat safely in the fridge or under cold running water to avoid the growth of bacteria that can make you sick.

- If hosting buffet style, use warming units or ice trays if the food will be out longer than two hours. Remember: keep the hot stuff hot and the cold stuff cold.

- If taking home leftovers, make sure to refrigerate or freeze food left out at room temperature within two hours of being served. Disease-causing bacteria can grow quickly at room temperature.

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