FOOD SAFETY AT HOME
Guidelines for Preparing & Serving Home-Prepared Food for Group Gatherings

Keep it HOT!
- When possible, prepare and cook the food the day of the event.
- Cook foods such as raw meat, eggs, and shellfish to a safe internal temperature; use a metal probe thermometer to check the final cooking temperature.
- Keep hot cooked food at or above 135 degrees F.
- Don’t serve any cooked or cold food that has been kept in the danger zone (41-135 degrees F) for ≥4 hours.

Keep it COLD!
- Keep cold food at or below 41 degrees F.
- If food is to be cooked a day or more in advance of an event, then cool from: 135 to 70 degrees within 2 hours; and from 70 to 41 degrees within 4 hours (use a metal probe thermometer to verify cooling temps).
- Some proper cooling methods include placing food in shallow pans without lids, using ice-water baths with frequent stirring of food, and cutting up food such as meat to cool in smaller portions.

Keep it CLEAN!
- Wash hands with soap often (prior, during, and after food prep).
- Use utensils with handles, paper napkins, wax paper or disposable gloves when handling ready-to-eat foods.
- Make sure all food-contact surfaces and equipment are clean (wash, rinse, and sanitize with bleach & water, using ½ teaspoon bleach per gallon of water).

Keep it HEALTHY!
- Make sure household members are symptom free of stomach illness (no vomiting or diarrhea for a minimum of 48 hours prior to preparing food for the event).

Visit www.homefoodsafety.org for more home food safety tips.