



26 December 2013

**FDA ADVISORY**

No. \_\_\_\_\_

**Subject: MANAGING FOOD LEFTOVERS TO ENSURE FOOD SAFETY**

Managing food leftovers during Christmas Season saves food and money. Leftover food often accounts to more than half of what is inside the refrigerator during the holidays. Consumers are advised of the following practical tips to ensure that leftovers do not become a source of foodborne illnesses:

1. Make sure that the refrigerator is functioning properly i.e. it can maintain the temperature 4 to 8°C or below. Temperatures above 8°C up to 60°C favor bacterial grow.
2. Observe the following when refrigerating, freezing, thawing, or reheating leftovers:
  - a) Do not overstock the refrigerator. It may prevent air circulation and cause hot spots inside. Aside from the chiller, the coldest part of the refrigerator is found below refrigerator.
  - b) Store or pack leftovers in airtight containers since they help store food longer. Containers that are 3 inches in height are best for storing leftovers since they allow food to cool immediately.
  - c) Clear plastic containers are preferred to serve as reminder that you can not store food for a long period of time. If possible, leftover should not be placed too deep inside refrigerator. Organise your refrigerator so that the leftovers are at eye level.
  - d) To save money, store or pack food in containers in small serving sizes enough for one meal. This is also true when freezing leftovers. Never freeze in one big container or packing size. It is more efficient to freeze leftovers in smaller portion sizes. This ensures thawing of what you only need for one meal. Frequent thawing of leftovers encourage bacterial growth and increases chances of bacterial contamination.
  - e) When reheating leftovers, make sure that the core of the food reaches at least 75°C. As a rule, reheat leftovers only once and any uneaten food should be thrown out. There are some food toxins that are not heat-labile and may accumulate after several reheating.
  - f) If you intend to store leftovers more than a week, it is advisable to label the containers.





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**FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION**



3. Plan your meals each time to minimize leftovers and prevent further food wastage.
4. Never rely on your eyes and nose or even your taste buds. When in doubt, throw the food away from human and animal food scavengers.

For any signs and symptoms of foodborne illness, consult your doctor immediately.

For more information and clarification, please contact us via [info@fda.gov.ph](mailto:info@fda.gov.ph).

  
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