



Renfrew County and District Health Unit
"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"

For Immediate Release

(Pembroke, Ontario, 3:40 p.m. December 24, 2020)

Food Safety For Public Events

There has been a recent report to the Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) of a food related event that was going to occur in the Arnprior area involving the serving of pre-cooked turkeys prepared at a private residence. A food safety investigation was conducted by a public health inspector. The investigation revealed that this event was not approved by the Health Unit and the food had not been prepared in accordance with safe food handling practices, creating a potential health hazard. The organizer of the event was informed that the turkeys could not be consumed by the public, especially by the vulnerable population for whom it was intended.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit is mandated under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, to provide a Food Safety Program. Under this Program, RCDHU Public Health Inspectors assist in the prevention and reduction of food-borne illness.

Dr. Robert Cushman, Acting Medical Officer of Health, RCDHU, states that "The reason for this action is to prevent food Borne illness, especially when providing food to an already vulnerable population. While we recognize how well intentioned this group was and we share their disappointment, the last thing we need right now is a food poisoning outbreak. Salmonella is not uncommon in poultry, and adequately cooking some 20 large birds is a challenge under the best of circumstances."

RCDHU wants to remind everyone that all food being provided to the general public, free or paid for, must be approved by a public health inspector to ensure that it is safe to consume. Typically the sponsor fills out an application at the health unit along with a plan, and there is an instructional review in advance to guide safe food preparation.

For more information, visit RCDHU's website at <https://www.rcdhu.com/healthy-living/safe-food/> or call 613-732-3629 or 1-800-267-1097.

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