

# Know how to be safe if you plan to use food gifts for the holidays

Food gifts from catalogs or the Internet will be popular this holiday season. Most of these gifts will reach their destination in safe condition and bring much pleasure to the recipient. However, if mail order foods are mishandled, a case of foodborne illness may result.

To prevent illness from food

gifts, USDA's Meat and Poultry Hotline advises consumers to follow these food safety recommendations when sending or receiving perishable foods during the upcoming holiday season.

Before ordering Food Gifts:

- Be sure the company is reputable. Sources of reputable catalog and Internet food retail-

ers are available at [www.shopthenet.org](http://www.shopthenet.org)

- Ask the mail order company if it ships perishable meat and poultry cold or frozen and packed with a cold source such as dry ice or freezer gel packs. The order should be packed in a foam box or heavy corrugated cardboard.

When Mailing Perishable Food Gifts:

- Make sure the food is frozen solid or refrigerator cold. Use an insulated cooler or a heavy corrugated box packed with a frozen gel-pack or purchase dry ice for keeping food cold. If using dry ice, don't touch it with bare hands or let it come in contact with the food.

- Wrap the box in two layers of brown paper. Mark the box "keep refrigerated." Affix an accurate mailing label to prevent any delivery problems. If dry ice was used, also write on the package "contains dry ice."

- Tell the recipients when the gift was mailed or a delivery date, if known, so they can be home to receive it. Do not have perishables delivered to an office; sufficient refrigerator space is not likely to be available and they may not receive mail on

weekends.

Food should be mailed by the fastest shipping method possible – preferably express overnight delivery.

Where possible, send food through the mail that is not perishable, such as hard salami, country ham, hard cheese and snack foods.

When Receiving Perishable Food Gifts:

- Immediately open packages labels "keep refrigerated." Be sure the food is still frozen or cold-to-the-touch with visible ice crystals. If so, refrigerate or freeze the food right away.

- If the food is not refrigerator cold, don't eat it. Call the company and most likely they will replace the food items for you. Remember, it's the shipper's responsibility to deliver perishable foods on time, but it's the consumer's responsibility to

[usbank.com](http://usbank.com)

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## Stress response and your health is topic of free Tuality health class

A free class covering Mental and Physical Responses to Stress will be held at Tuality Health Education Center, 334 SE Eighth Avenue in Hillsboro, on Saturday, November 23, from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

During the first half of the class, Bea Berry, RN, MS, president and founder of Wellness 2000, Inc., will discuss Physical Stress Response and Your Health, including the effects of stress on hypertension, muscle-skeletal tension, heart disease, endocrine and immune response, and other health conditions. She will share practical methods to identify your health risks, to develop awareness of your body's responses, to become more calm and relaxed in your daily activities, and to look at ways that your lifestyle may

compound your stress response.

In the second half, Steven J. Vincent, Psy. D., licensed clinical psychologist, Western Psychological & Counseling Services, Hillsboro, will present Effective Strategies for Managing the Stress in Your Life. He will discuss many important aspects of stress reactions and will present several preventive and coping stress-management strategies.

This presentation is designed to help equip you with the tools you need to better recognize and positively modify your reactions to everyday stressors, leading to more joy and productivity at home and work.

For more information, call Tuality Healthcare Community Education at 503-681-1700.



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