

		<b>Upstate New York Poison Center</b>
<b>1-800-222-1222</b>		
<b>www.upstatepoison.org</b>		

# Poison Prevention

## Newsletter

## December 2016

UPSTATE  
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

### The Magic of Mistletoe



Mistletoe was a sacred plant of the Celtic Druids and the North American Indians. Druid priests cut mistletoe from an oak tree. Then, they divided the branches into sprigs and distributed them to believers, who hung them over doorways as protection against evils. A sprig placed in a baby's cradle was thought to protect the child from goblins.

Mistletoe is a symbol for peace and joy. The idea originated in the ancient times of the Druids: whenever enemies met under the mistletoe in the forest, they had to lay down their arms and observe a truce until the next day. From this comes the custom of hanging a ball of mistletoe from the ceiling and exchanging kisses under it as a sign of friendship and goodwill.

Mistletoe is a parasite that has no roots of its own and lives off the tree to which it has attached itself. Druid priests used mistletoe in sacrifices to their gods while the Celts felt it possessed miraculous healing powers. In fact, in the Celtic language mistletoe means "all-heal." It not only cured diseases, but could also render poisons harmless and keep the beholder safe from witchcraft and protect the house from ghosts. With all of this, it was thought to bring good luck to anyone privileged to have it.

So how poisonous is mistletoe? Mistletoe contains toxins, which can cause blurred vision, nausea, abdominal pain, diarrhea, blood pressure changes and even death. Eating any part of the plant but especially the leaves or berries can result in sickness and possibly death. Eating any part of a mistletoe plant would warrant a call to a Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222.

### Keep Your Holidays Happy: Preparing Ready-To-Cook Foods

**EATING THEM RIGHT OUT OF THE PACKAGE, WITHOUT COOKING, COULD MAKE YOU SICK**

Cookies are a holiday favorite – and this season is a good time to remember that ready-to-cook foods of all kinds, including raw, packaged cookie dough, do need to be cooked. Eating these kinds of foods right out of the package, without cooking them, could make you sick from bacteria. Cooking them according to the package directions before you eat them kills bacteria that could make you sick.

Whether it's packaged cookie dough or a frozen entrée or pizza or any of the other ready-to-cook foods we use for convenience, cook or bake them according to the directions on the package, to help keep your holidays happy.

Most people who get sick from bacteria in ready-to-cook foods that aren't cooked properly will get better by themselves, although foodborne illness isn't a very pleasant way to spend the holidays. But anyone, of any age or health condition, could get very sick or die from these bacteria. This is especially true for people with weak immune systems; for example, the very young, the elderly, and people with diseases that weaken the immune system or who are on medicines that suppress the immune system (for example, some medicines used for rheumatoid arthritis).

Pregnant women also need to be especially careful to follow cooking directions on packages, since some bacteria are very harmful or deadly to unborn babies.

It's a good safety tip to keep in mind all year, not just in the holiday season: Follow the directions on your ready-to-cook food packages to help keep yourself and your loved ones healthy.

**Happy Holidays and remember to BE FOOD SAFE!**

<http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm188807.htm>; 12/6/16

*Continued on page 2*

#### Food Safety Questions? Call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline

If you have a question about meat, poultry, or egg products, call the **USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline toll free at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854)**.

The Hotline is open year-round Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. ET (English or Spanish). Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day. Check out the FSIS Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov)

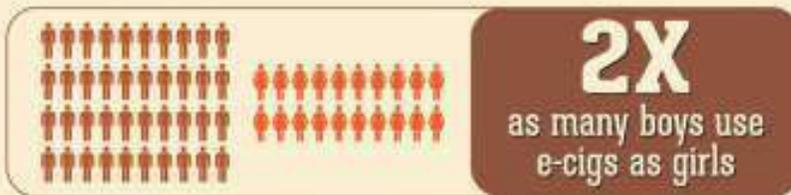
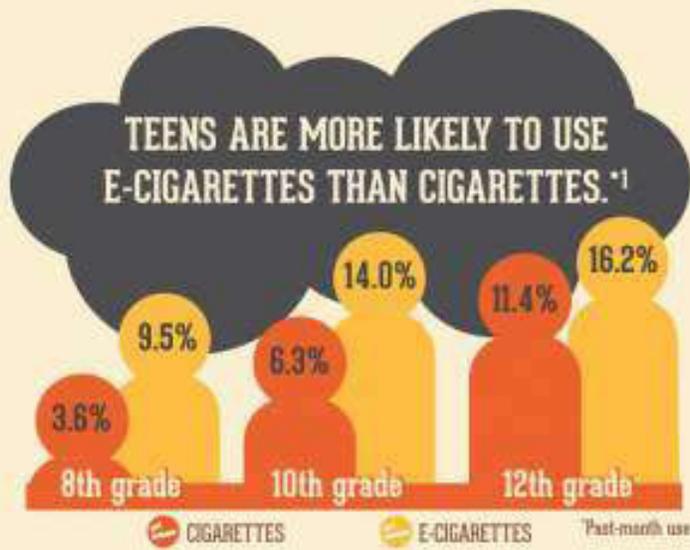
# Flight Safety and E-Cigarettes

In its continuing effort to improve transportation safety, the U.S. Department of Transportation Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration issued a final rule this year to prohibit passengers and crewmembers from carrying battery-powered portable electronic smoking devices (e.g. e-cigarettes, e-cigs, e-cigars, e-pipes, personal vaporizers, electronic nicotine delivery systems) in checked baggage and prohibit passengers and crewmembers from charging the devices and/or batteries on board the aircraft.

Passengers may continue to carry e-cigarettes for personal use in carry-on baggage or on their person but may not use them on flights. The Department's current regulatory ban on smoking of tobacco products on passenger flights includes the use of electronic cigarettes. Nevertheless, to prevent passenger or crewmember confusion, the Department has proposed to amend its existing airline smoking rule to explicitly ban use of electronic cigarettes aboard aircraft.

<https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/dot-issues-new-flight-safety-rule-e-cigarettes:12/5/16>

# Teens and E-cigarettes



## Keep Your Holidays Happy

Continued from page 1

### FOOD SAFETY WORD MATCH

Match the words in the first column with the correct definition in the second column. For some help, you can read the **FIGHT BAC!**® Keep Food Safe From Bacteria brochure.

1. Two Hour Rule
2. Personal Hygiene
3. Perishable Food
4. Cross-Contamination
5. Contaminated Food
6. Danger Zone
7. Foodborne illness
8. The Thaw Law
9. Sanitation
10. Thorough cooking

- a. The transfer of harmful bacteria from one food to another. Harmful bacteria can also be transferred to food from another source, such as hands.
- b. Defrost foods in the refrigerator, microwave, or under running water. Never defrost food on the kitchen counter.
- c. Keeping work areas free from dirt or bacteria.
- d. Foods that can become unsafe or spoil quickly if not refrigerated or frozen.
- e. Cleanliness, keeping yourself clean.
- f. Perishable food should not be left at room temperature longer than two hours.
- g. Food that contains harmful microbes.
- h. Cooking food to a safe internal temperature.
- i. Sickness caused by eating contaminated food, sometimes called food poisoning.
- j. The range of temperatures at which most bacteria multiply rapidly - between 40° and 140° Fahrenheit.

# Program your cell phone 1-800-222-1222



**You just may save a life!**

## A Poisoning Can Happen to **You!**



**UPSTATE**  
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

Poison Emergency? Poison Information? Call Us!



**UPSTATE**  
MEDICAL UNIVERSITY



*Serving 54 counties of New York State*

### Unintentional Poisoning Can Happen To You... At Any Age!

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
AT [WWW.UPSTATEPOISON.ORG](http://WWW.UPSTATEPOISON.ORG)  
FOR A MORE POISON  
RESOURCES, INCLUDING  
BROCHURES, POSTERS,  
ARCHIEVED NEWSLETTERS  
AND....



Upstate Medical University

750 East Adams Street • Syracuse, NY 13210

P: 1.800.222.1222 F: 315.464.7077 W: [upstatepoison.org](http://upstatepoison.org)