

Other Food Handling Tips:

- Wash fresh fruits and vegetables thoroughly before eating or cutting into them.
- Separate raw meats and poultry from other foods such as fruits and vegetables. Avoid cross contamination by using separate cutting boards, knives, and platters for these foods.
- Wash cutting boards, utensils, and platters after preparing each food item.
- Bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a rolling boil when reheating.
- Keep hot foods hot. Use chafing dishes or pans with Sternos or other heating devices, or keep foods in the oven at a temperature to ensure they remain at 135°F or above.
- Keep cold foods cold (40°F or below). Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours. Throw out foods that should have been kept cold but have been left out for more than two hours.
- Leftovers should be used within 3 to 4 days.
- "Taste testing" foods or drinks to see if they have spoiled is not recommended.

During the holidays, Public Health investigates cases of foodborne illness that are the result of undercooked food and/or poor food handling practices. Typical symptoms of foodborne illness include:

- Stomach pain
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Symptoms may appear hours/days after consumption
- Most symptoms may go away after a few hours/days without treatment

Foodborne illness can be severe and life-threatening in:

- Older adults
- Pregnant women
- Infants and young children
- Those with weakened immune systems

For more information on safe cooking, visit the USDA website at www.usda.gov or call their Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854.

Food safety specialists are available, in English or Spanish, Monday through Friday, 10 AM - 6 PM (EST). An extensive menu of recorded food safety messages may be heard 24 hours a day.



Holiday Edition

A Guide to... **FOOD SAFETY**

Tips to prevent food contamination
and foodborne illness



Safe Food Preparation Recommendations

Raw or undercooked meats including turkey, chicken, beef, and lamb can contain bacteria such as *Campylobacter*, *Salmonella* or *E. coli*, that cause diarrhea and other health problems. It's important to note that freezing does not kill these bacteria but cooking meats to the proper temperatures does kill them.

When purchasing a fresh turkey, plan to cook it within 1-2 days after purchase. The United States Department of Agriculture does not recommend purchasing retail-stuffed fresh turkey, roasters, Cornish hens, or other whole stuffed poultry because of the highly perishable nature of a previously stuffed item.



To Cook a Turkey

When roasting a whole turkey:

Use a food thermometer to make sure it cooks to 165°F or higher. Insert the thermometer in the thickest part of the thigh, but not against the bone. For safety and uniform doneness, cook stuffing separately in a casserole dish.

For pre-cooked turkey dinners:

Eat within 2 hours or refrigerate components separately, then reheat to a temperature of at least 165°F.

Frozen pre-stuffed turkeys:

Cook from the frozen state by following package directions.

When deep frying a turkey:

Remember the dangers of deep frying a turkey. Turkey fryers can easily start a fire. Use your turkey fryer only outdoors on a sturdy, level surface well away from things that can burn. Make sure to have a "3-foot kid-and-pet-free zone" around your turkey fryer to protect against burn injuries.

Hand Washing Tips

Wash your hands often and thoroughly with warm water and soap for 20 seconds; paying special attention to the areas around and under your fingernails.

Wash your hands:

- Before engaging in food preparation.
- Before and after eating or drinking.
- In between tasks (e.g. from working with raw food to ready to eat food, removing trash).
- After using the restroom.
- After touching a body part, hair, or clothes.
- After sneezing, coughing, and or blowing your nose.



To Thaw a Turkey

- In the Refrigerator:
 - Place your frozen turkey in its original wrapper in the refrigerator (40°F or below).
 - Allow approximately 24 hours of thaw time per 5 pounds of turkey.
 - After thawing, keep turkey refrigerated for only 1-2 days before cooking.
- In Cold Water:
 - Place securely wrapped turkey in cold water and change the water every 30 minutes.
 - Allow about 30 minutes defrosting time per pound of turkey.
 - Cook immediately after thawing.
- Do not thaw frozen pre-stuffed turkeys before cooking.
- Do not refreeze a turkey that has been thawed.

