

Simple steps for a safe Thanksgiving turkey

This Thanksgiving, millions of people will enjoy a plateful of turkey. Enjoy your meal, but remember to prepare your turkey safely to avoid food poisoning. This starts from the moment you bring your turkey home from the store.

CLEAN YOUR HANDS, NOT THE TURKEY

Don't rinse or wash your turkey in the sink. This can spread germs. Instead, wash your hands well, both before and after handling the turkey.

After you've put the turkey in the oven, carefully wash and disinfect any surfaces that touched the raw turkey.

TEMPERATURE IS KEY

Cook your turkey at 325°F or above. Lower temperatures won't heat up the bird quickly enough to kill bacteria. When you think the turkey is done, check the temperature. Use a meat thermometer and check the inner part of the thigh and wing. Also check the thickest part of the breast. The turkey is done when all of them are at 165°F.

STELLAR STUFFING

If you stuff your turkey, make sure it is completely cooked. Use a food thermometer to check that the stuffing reaches 165°F. After taking the turkey out of the oven, leave the stuffing in for about 20 more minutes. This helps ensure it is cooked thoroughly.

THINK THAWING

Never thaw your turkey by leaving it out on the counter. When a turkey is left at room temperature for 2 hours, it can grow bacteria that make you sick. Instead, you can:

- Thaw your turkey in the refrigerator.
- Put your turkey in a plastic bag and thaw in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes.

GREAT LEFTOVERS

Don't leave leftover turkey out for more than two hours after cooking it. Put it in the refrigerator as soon as possible.

Many people experience food poisoning around the holidays. This is often due to incorrectly cooked or stored turkey. This doesn't have to happen to your family. Be safe about preparing your turkey and stay healthy this holiday.

