



# TURKEY SAFETY TIPS

Big Thanksgiving Meals are a fun tradition that create great family memories. Turkey is often the star of the show – but raw poultry can contain salmonella bacteria, which can lead to food poisoning. Here are some tips from our friends at the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):

- Every time you touch raw turkey, **you MUST** wash your hands before touching anything else. Otherwise you run the risk of spreading bacteria to other food and items.
- If your turkey is frozen, then you must let it thaw before you cook it. It takes 3 to 4 days for a 15-pound turkey to thaw in a refrigerator. If you wish to use a microwave, then consult the owner's manual beforehand to find the proper settings and times. You can put a turkey in a sink with cold water if you change the water every 20 minutes. Never let a turkey thaw on the counter. Once the turkey is thawed, do not refreeze it.
- Cooking stuffing in a casserole dish makes it easy to make sure it is thoroughly cooked. If you put stuffing in the turkey, do so **just before** cooking. Use a food thermometer to make sure the stuffing's center reaches 165°F. Bacteria can survive in stuffing that has not reached 165°F and may then cause food poisoning. Wait for 20 minutes after removing the bird from the oven before removing the stuffing from the turkey's cavity; this allows it to cook a little more.
- Set the oven temperature to at least 325°F. Place the completely thawed turkey with the breast side up in a roasting pan that is 2 to 2-1/2 inches deep. Cooking times will vary depending on the weight of the turkey. To make sure the turkey has reached a safe internal temperature of 165°F, check by inserting a food thermometer into the center of the stuffing and the thickest portions of the breast, thigh, and wing joint. Let the turkey stand 20 minutes before removing all stuffing from the cavity and carving the meat.
- Refrigerate leftovers at 40°F or colder as soon as possible and within two hours of preparation to prevent food poisoning.