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## Thanksgiving Safety Tips



Food safety starts from the purchase to the preparation, cooking and serving of the turkey and other traditional dishes. Here are some helpful tips to keep your Thanksgiving Day dinner safe, so you can enjoy the company of your family and guests. Foodborne illnesses are caused when we consume food contaminated with certain bacteria, parasites or viruses. The risk of food poisoning, though, can be reduced through proper cleaning, separating, cooking, and chilling of foods.

Any poultry needs special attention when handling. Thawing a frozen turkey the proper way is important to the safety of your family. Never thaw a turkey at room temperature because this promotes the growth of dangerous bacteria. The safest way to thaw a turkey is to thaw it in the refrigerator. You should do this with the turkey still in its' own unopened wrapper breast facing up and placed on a tray. The accepted rule of thumb for time is 1 day refrigerator thawing for every four pounds of turkey.

### *Don't Invite Bacteria to Dinner*

- ◆ Using soap and warm water, wash your hands for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, using the bathroom or touching pets.
- ◆ Keep the kitchen off-limits to young children and adults that are not helping with food preparations to lessen the possibility of kitchen mishaps.
- ◆ Wash cutting boards, counters, and utensils often. Use two cutting boards, one for washed produce and one for raw meat and seafood.
- ◆ Wash fresh vegetables and fruits in drinkable running water.
- ◆ Separate raw foods from cooked foods, to avoid cross-contamination.
- ◆ Start holiday cooking with a clean stove and oven.
- ◆ Cook foods to at least the internal temperature that kills harmful bacteria. For example, whole poultry should be at least 85° C (185° F).
- ◆ Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- ◆ Cook on the back burners when possible and turn pot handles in so they don't extend over the edge of the stove.
- ◆ Never leave cooking unattended. If you must leave the kitchen while cooking, turn off the stove, or have someone else watch what is being cooked.

### *To avoid kitchen fires*

Holiday fires can turn a joyous occasion into tragedy. Follow the guidelines below to avoid a fire this holiday season.

- ◆ Keep Thanksgiving decorations and kitchen clutter away from sources of direct heat.
- ◆ When cooking, do not wear clothing with loose sleeves or dangling jewelry. The clothing can catch on fire and the jewelry can catch on pot handles, causing spills and burns.
- ◆ Place heavy non-combustible hot pads where food will be served
- ◆ Keep extra long oven mitts near the stove
- ◆ Move away from the stove anything that could catch on fire, such as paper towels, potholders and curtains
- ◆ Establish a safe zone around the stove while cooking - no children or pets within three feet
- ◆ No Smoking in the Kitchen

***Don't let this holiday season end in tragedy. Follow these safe cooking and kitchen safety tips and have a joyous Thanksgiving for all!***

