

Safety Bulletin



Safe Turkey Shortcuts SB04-004



Lets face it. Sometime between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day, turkey will find its way onto your menu. Because time is one thing you don't have much of during the holidays, you'll be looking for shortcuts. The good news is that there are shortcuts you can take without risking an outbreak of food-borne illness.

Serving turkey also requires some forethought. While trying to save time at the last minute, a host may put huge platters of food on the table long before guests arrive. During this time, bacteria could multiply significantly.

To play it safe, make up smaller platters of food ahead of time and keep them in the refrigerator or oven until you need refills for the table.

Put food out just before guests arrive, you may want to use heated serving units such as hot trays or chafing dishes to keep food hot. These should hold the food at temperatures above 140°F. Remember: never leave food out over 2 hours, even in heated units.

When you've finished eating, the last thing you want to think about is packing away the leftovers. But those cold turkey sandwiches you're looking forward to could be jeopardized if you don't quickly refrigerate the meat.

Follow this drill" Remove the stuffing from the bird and the meat from the carcass. Store them in meal-sized portions in shallow containers. Cutting into smaller portions will allow the refrigerator air to penetrate and cool the meat.

Leftover turkey will keep in the refrigerator for 3 or 4 days. Stuffing and gravy should be used within 1 or 2 days. Bring leftover gravy to a rolling boil (185°F) before serving.

If you are preparing a frozen turkey, be sure to defrost the turkey in the refrigerator, never at room temperature (24 hours for every 5 pounds). You can speed up the defrosting by soaking the turkey in cold water (30 min. per pound).

The following is a list of general food preparation tips you'll want to follow in order to avoid a major source of holiday illness: Food Poisoning!

- ⌚ Keep food, utensils, preparation surfaces, and hands clean.
- ⌚ Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- ⌚ Keep cold foods on a bed of ice while serving.
- ⌚ After the meal refrigerate food as soon as possible.
- ⌚ Don't let juices from raw meat come in contact with other foods unless they will be cooked together.
- ⌚ Marinate food in the refrigerator, not on the counter.