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Food Safety Tips for Turkey Time



Preparing a turkey for Thanksgiving is a lot of work, and as the big day approaches it can be tempting to cut corners. However, one area where you should never do things in half-measures is food safety. The last thing anybody wants to deal with during Thanksgiving aftermath is food poisoning.

The "danger zone" is between 40° F and 140° F—the temperature range where foodborne bacteria multiply rapidly. When preparing a turkey, be aware of the four main safety issues: thawing, preparing, stuffing and cooking to adequate temperature.

Thawing. There are three safe ways to thaw food: in the refrigerator, in cold water and in a microwave oven. For refrigerator thawing, place the turkey in a container to prevent juices from dripping on other foods. Allow approximately 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds in a refrigerator set at 40° F or below.

To thaw in cold water, seal the turkey in a watertight bag and submerge in cold

water. Allow 30 minutes of submersion per pound of turkey and change the water every 30 minutes. For microwave thawing, follow the manufacturer's instructions for defrosting. Plan to cook the bird immediately after microwaving thawing to prevent bacteria from developing on the meat.

Preparation. After preparing the turkey, thoroughly wash your hands and disinfect utensils or surfaces to avoid bacteria from the turkey spreading to other foods.

Stuffing. For optimal safety and uniform doneness, cook the stuffing outside the turkey in a casserole dish. However, if you place stuffing inside the turkey, do so just before cooking, and use a food thermometer. Make sure the center of the stuffing reaches a safe minimum internal temperature of 165° F.

Cooking. Be sure the turkey is completely thawed, and set the oven to a minimum temperature of 325° F. Place the turkey breast-side up on a flat wire rack in a shallow roasting pan 2 to 2-1/2 inches deep. Use a food thermometer to ensure the stuffing, breast, thigh and wing joint reach a safe minimum internal temperature of 165° F. Cooking times will vary by size and oven. When finished, let the turkey stand 20 minutes before removing all stuffing from the cavity and carving the meat.

Lung Cancer Risk Awareness

Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death and the second-most diagnosed cancer in both men and women in the United States.

Lung cancer begins in the lungs and may spread to lymph nodes or other organs in the body, such as the brain. Cancer may also spread from other organs to the lungs.

Because there are very few nerve endings in the lungs, many people with lung cancer do not show symptoms until the disease is in its later stages.

There are two main types of lung cancer: small cell and non-small cell. Non-small cell lung cancer makes up about 80 percent of cases and spreads to other parts of the body more slowly than small-cell lung cancer does. Small-cell lung cancer is almost always associated with smoking.

Cigarette smoking is the number one risk factor for lung cancer. The lifetime risk of lung cancer in non-smokers is very small. Not smoking is the single best thing you can do to avoid lung cancer

To further minimize your risk of developing lung cancer, test your home for radon and your workplace for industrial compounds. Also be sure to avoid air pollution whenever possible.

DID YOU KNOW

Lung cancer causes more deaths than the next three most common cancers (colon, breast and prostate) combined.



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A Good Night's Sleep

Long an afterthought in the public health community, the importance of sleep is rapidly gaining recognition as a key driver of wellbeing. Lack of sleep is now associated with a host of hazards and maladies including reckless driving and chronic illness. Here are some tips to ensure you get the proper amount of rest you need to maintain good health:

1. Go to bed and wake up at the same time each day.
2. Avoid caffeine and nicotine after noon.
3. Avoid large meals and alcohol right before bedtime.
4. Relax before bed with a book or with music. No electronic screens!
5. Exercise is great, but no later than two to three hours before bed.
6. Make sure your bedroom is a quiet, dark and relaxing environment, and is neither too hot nor too cold.

7. Don't lie in bed awake longer than 20 minutes. The anxiety of being awake can make it harder to fall asleep. Instead, get up and do a relaxing activity until you get tired.



Giving Thanks for Savings

Thanksgiving is all about gratitude and togetherness, but it's also about abundance—and that can get pricey. While it may seem out-of-place to budget your feast, hosting a get-together you can afford while avoiding the stress associated with cost and waste will guarantee you a more enjoyable holiday.

Estimate—Have a plan before going to the store. Assume one pound of turkey per person. Use the serving size information on side dish recipes. You can use an online meal calculator to help you determine how much food you need. Estimate a little more if you want to have leftovers. Make a list based on your calculations so as not to overbuy.

Buy generic brands in bulk—If you're going to feed a large crowd, it's worth it to make a trip to a warehouse retailer for non-perishable items like canned goods, paper products and alcohol. Using store or generic brands for staple items like seasoning and stock will save you a lot of money without affecting taste.

Store promotions—Keep an eye out for special coupons and promotions around Thanksgiving. Some stores offer a free turkey if you spend a certain amount of money. Also, be on the lookout for coupons in the weeks before Thanksgiving.

BYOD (Bring Your Own Dish)—If you're hosting, it isn't stingy to ask your guests to bring food. Your guests will not fault you for asking them to bring a dish or beverage, especially since you are already doing so much. Just be sure to request types of dishes, not specific ones. For instance, ask people to bring an appetizer, side dish or dessert.

Cranberry Stuffing

This homemade stuffing is a healthier and better-tasting alternative to most store-bought brands, and baking it separately from the turkey reduces the amount of calories and fat per serving. Use it to lighten up this year's Thanksgiving.

- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup chopped celery
- ½ cup chopped onion
- 10 slices of toasted whole wheat bread, cut into cubes
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- 1 tsp. dried tarragon
- ½ tsp. paprika
- ⅛ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ½ cup chopped fresh cranberries
- 1 cup whole water chestnuts
- 1 cup chopped apple

Preheat the oven to 350° F. Lightly coat a 2-quart baking dish with cooking spray. In a large skillet, heat the chicken broth over medium heat. Add the celery and onion and sauté until the vegetables are tender, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. In a large bowl, combine the bread cubes, parsley, tarragon, paprika, nutmeg, cranberries, water chestnuts and chopped apples. Add the onion and celery mixture. Stir to mix evenly. Spoon stuffing into the prepared baking dish. Cover with aluminum foil and bake for 20 minutes. Uncover and bake 10 more minutes. Serve immediately.

Yield: 6 servings. Each serving provides 147 calories, 2g of fat, 0.5g of saturated fat, 1mg of cholesterol, 263mg of sodium and 5g of fiber.

Source: *Mayo Clinic*