



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Turkey Talk

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, one in six Americans (48 million) will get sick from dangerous food-borne bacteria this year. The holiday meal and its preparation is the centerpiece of the Thanksgiving celebration and safe food handling in the kitchen is a very important part of the holiday. To keep your friends and family safe from food poisoning there are certain steps that everyone should know:

DO ...

- **DO** ask all kitchen helpers to wash their hands using warm water and soap for 20 seconds before and after handling food.
- **DO** keep turkey in its original wrapping, refrigerated until ready to cook.
- **DO** defrost a frozen turkey by refrigeration or cold running water.
- **DO** allow one day for every 5 pounds to defrost in the refrigerator. In a cold water bath, change the water every 30 minutes. A 20-pound turkey will take 12 hours to defrost in cold water and should be cooked immediately after thawing.
- **DO** use a meat thermometer to check if turkey is done. The turkey should cook until the internal temperature reaches a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees F.
- **DO** remove the stuffing immediately after the turkey is cooked.
- **DO** store the turkey and stuffing separately.
- **DO** store leftover turkey in the refrigerator and use within 3-4 days.
- **DO** store leftover stuffing and gravy in the refrigerator and use within 1-2 days.

DON'T...

- **DON'T** defrost a turkey at room temperature. Bacteria can multiply to unsafe numbers on outer layers before inner layers have defrosted.
- **DON'T** leave an uncooked thawed turkey out of the refrigerator longer than 2 hours.
- **DON'T** partially cook the turkey one day and continue roasting the next day.
- **DON'T** prepare food if you are sick or have any nose or eye infection.
- **DON'T** leave leftovers out on the counter longer than 2 hours.
- **DON'T** store leftover stuffing in the turkey.
- **DON'T** re-freeze a completely thawed uncooked turkey.
- **DON'T** stuff turkeys as it makes it difficult for the internal temperature to reach 165°F within a safe period of time. If you must stuff your turkey, stuff it lightly before cooking and leave room for the oven to cook the interior of the turkey and stuffing.

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center offers tips on Thanksgiving safety and poison prevention as a free service to the public. For more information, contact the Nebraska Regional Poison Center by calling toll-free at 1-800-222-1222.