



# THANKSGIVING TURKEY FOOD SAFETY

Having a turkey on your Thanksgiving table is a timeless American tradition. Use this information when purchasing, preparing, handling and serving your Thanksgiving turkey.

## BUYING YOUR THANKSGIVING TURKEY

### Fresh Turkey

- Check packaging for leaks and separate from other items in the cart
- Leave turkey in bag and place in a pan or on a tray to prevent dripping
- Store on bottom shelf of fridge at or below 41°F

### Frozen Turkey

- Keep turkey in the freezer (0°F) until it's ready to thaw and be cooked
- Thawing in refrigerator will take ~24 hours for every 5 pounds

**If you receive a donated fresh or frozen turkey from a food pantry, non-profit organization, etc. past its expiration date, it is still safe to eat, if handled and cooked properly.**

### Thawing

- Thaw turkey quickly with the following methods:
  - Cool water: Submerge in sink or container of cool water, changing every 30 minutes. Allow 30 minutes per pound.
  - Microwave: Read manual instructions. Remove wrapping. Rotate several times. Cook turkey immediately after thawing. Allow 6 minutes per pound.
  - Cook: Use method if turkey is partially thawed. Allow at least 50% longer time to cook through.

### Preparing

- You do not need to wash your turkey. Washing raw poultry won't kill bacteria, but cooking to the proper internal temperature will. However, when washing, harmful bacteria like Salmonella and Campylobacter can be sprayed up to 3 feet on nearby surfaces.
- To prevent the spread of bacteria, clean and sanitize utensils and work surfaces and wash hands after preparing raw poultry.

### Cooking

- When the juices run clear or the turkey is a golden brown color it does not necessarily indicate the turkey is done. The only way to tell is by using a verified food thermometer to check the internal temperature.
- Poultry, like turkey and chicken, must be cooked to an internal temperature of at least 165°F for safety. Check temperature in three spots including:
  - Thickest part of the breast
  - Innermost part of the wing
  - Innermost part of the thigh
- For safety, stuffing must also reach 165°F checked in multiple places. This could cause the turkey to be cooked to over 165°F.
  - To avoid overcooking, consider making stuffing separately