

To wash or not to wash your turkey

Washing your hands as you prepare your Thanksgiving meal is essential. But be sure that you do not wash your turkey.

Washing anything makes it cleaner and safer, right?

Not necessarily. Wash your hands, but not the turkey! Many consumers think that washing their turkey will remove bacteria and make it safer.

However, it's virtually impossible to wash bacteria off the bird. Instead, juices that splash during washing can transfer bacteria onto the surfaces of your kitchen, other foods and utensils. This is called cross-contamination, which can make you and your guests very sick.

Washing your hands before and after handling your turkey and its packaging is crucial to avoid spreading harmful bacteria. Be sure to wash your hands with warm water and soap for 20 seconds.

This simple, but important step can help keep you and your guests safe from foodborne illness. If your raw turkey or its juices come in contact with kitchen surfaces, wash the counter tops and sinks with hot, soapy water.

For extra protection, surfaces may be sanitized with a solution of 1 tablespoon of unscented, liquid chlorine bleach per gallon of water. Be sure to let those areas dry thoroughly.

The only way to destroy bacteria on your turkey is to cook it to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees as measured with a food thermometer. Some chefs prefer to cook to a higher temperature for flavor and texture.

Therefore, you don't need to wash your turkey, but you will need a food thermometer on Thanksgiving Day. Remember to check the turkey's temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing, and the thickest part of the breast to be sure it is free of illness-causing bacteria. Visit www.foodsafety.gov for more information.

Questions? Ask Karen, the virtual food safety representative, is available 24/7 at www.AskKaren.gov.

You can also call the U.S. Department of Agriculture Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854 from 8 a.m.–2 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day.

Happy Thanksgiving!

Donna Karlsons, USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service



Calendar

Nov. 27-28

- Health department closed for Thanksgiving

Dec. 1

- FluMist at Marion County Public Schools
- Safe Kids Marion meeting

Dec. 2

- FluMist at Marion County Public Schools

Dec. 3

- WIC Mom & Baby Club meeting

Dec. 9

- WIC Breastfeeding class

Be a healthy host

Help your guests survive the big feast without putting on too many extra pounds

If you're hosting this year's holiday gathering, you have an advantage. You have the opportunity to serve great tasting healthful foods. Follow these tips for a happy (and healthy) holiday party:

- **Use healthier substitutions** when cooking and baking to save on fat and calories. Substitute nonfat or low-fat milk instead of whole milk. Choose low-fat cheese. Swap one egg with two egg whites.
- **Serve a healthy version of a favorite holiday dish.** Chances are, your guests won't notice and you'll feel great knowing you're serving something healthier.
- **Offer whole grains.** Serve low-fat dip or low-fat cheese with whole grain crackers or bread. Add whole wheat rolls to your dinner menu instead of white rolls.
- **Think fruits and vegetables.** Serve fruits and veggies on appetizer trays. Try to include fruits and vegetables on at least half of your serving table to give you, and your guests, lots of great low-calorie options to fill up on. Try unique vegetables like baby zucchini or edamame.
- **Add some beans.** Fiber fills you up faster and keeps you full. Serve a bean dip or mix beans into appetizers or salads.
- **Cook up lean meats and fish.** These are lower in fat and calories and offer a great alternative to heavier fare. Try shrimp, grilled or broiled salmon, roasted turkey breast, or lean roast beef.
- **Make mini-desserts.** Serve sweets in small baking cups or cut cakes and brownies into small bite-sized pieces. Bake bite-sized cookies. With smaller choices, guests can taste two or three desserts without getting stuffed or feel like they are missing out by only trying one slice of pie.
- **Have low-calorie beverages on hand.** Allow guests to choose from a variety of healthy options such as, diet soda, seltzer water, light beer, mineral water and coffee.
- **Move around.** Turn on some festive music and clear space for a dance floor. Tell your guests to bring a warm jacket for an after dinner stroll to see the holiday lights. Make it a game night with charades or other active games.

Courtesy the [Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge](#).



Maintain, don't gain

Remember, if you've joined the Join the Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge, the goal is to maintain your current weight. Take these steps:

- Weigh yourself
- Calculate how many calories you need each day
- Track what you eat
- Track what you do
- Make a plan

Join the Healthiest Weight Florida Maintain, Don't Gain Holiday Challenge. Go to www.esmmweighless.com/holiday-challenge-live/

Need Info? Call 352-629-0137

Birth & Death Certificates ext. 2064
 Communicable Diseases ext. 2088
 Dental Clinic 352-622-2664
 Environmental Health ext. 2086

Family Planning ext. 2091
 Health Education ext. 2195
 Healthy Start ext. 2275
 HIV/AIDS ext. 2073
 Immunizations ext. 2017

Maternity ext. 2089
 School Health ext. 2043
 Sexually Transmitted Diseases ext. 2073
 WIC & Nutrition ext. 2124



LET'S TALK TURKEY

Unsafe handling and under-cooking your holiday bird can cause foodborne illnesses. Here are a few tips from the USDA to keep your Thanksgiving safe and delicious!

Types of turkeys regulated by the USDA:



*For more information about each type of turkey, visit fsis.usda.gov.

3 WAYS TO THAW

While frozen, a turkey is safe indefinitely. As soon as it begins to thaw, bacteria that may have been present before freezing will begin to grow again. Here are three ways to safely thaw your bird:

Refrigerator:

Safe to store the turkey for another 1 - 2 days in the refrigerator.

This is the USDA recommended thawing method.

How to thaw:
Allow approximately 24 hrs. for every 4-5lbs of bird.



Cold water:

Cook immediately after thawing.

How to thaw:

Submerge the bird in cold water & change every 30 mins.



Microwave:

Cook immediately after thawing.



How to thaw:

Use defrost function based on weight

For more information on safe thawing methods, visit fsis.usda.gov.

DID YOU KNOW?



It's safe to cook a frozen turkey though cooking time will be 50% longer!

Clean

Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and warm water.

Utensils
Plates
Countertops
Cutting boards

SHOULD ALSO BE WASHED

Bacteria, which can be present inside and outside a turkey, can't be washed off the bird! **Cooking is the only way to destroy this potentially dangerous bacteria.**

SO DON'T WASH YOUR TURKEY!!

SEPARATE

Separate raw turkey from fresh food, and use separate cutting boards, plates, and utensils.

Keep dishes that touch raw food separate, too!

Wash items that touch raw meat with soap and warm water.

COOK

Your bird is not safe until it reaches 165 °F — you cannot tell by the color.

Remember to ensure any stuffing cooked with the bird reaches 165 °F, too!

Use three places to check the temperature.

- Thickest part of breast
- Innermost part of wing
- Innermost part of thigh

When turkey is removed from the oven, let it stand 20 minutes before carving to allow juices to settle.

CHILL

Take your time around the dinner table, but refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours!

Safe in fridge: 3-4 days

Safe frozen: but use within 2-6 months for best quality.

Last day Thanksgiving leftovers are safe from the fridge.

Leftover turkey should be cut into smaller pieces, and store items separately in smaller containers.

Be sure to pack leftovers in a cooler if traveling.

Reheat thoroughly to a temperature of 165 °F.

Remember, bacteria that cause foodborne illnesses can't be smelled or tasted!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
Visit foodsafety.gov

If you have a specific question, call the **USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline** at 1-888-MPHOTLINE or visit AskKaren.gov. Visit Pregunteleakaren.gov for questions in Spanish.



Connect with the Florida Department of Health online

