

Keeping poop off the plate during a holiday meal



- Thaw your turkey in the fridge, microwave, in cool water, or on the counter.
- Clean utensils and work surfaces after preparing raw turkey for roasting.
- Wash your hands after getting the turkey ready.
- Cook your turkey to an internal temperature of 165°F.



Holiday turkey meals have been linked to outbreaks of Salmonella and Campylobacter. Following steps to safely thaw, prepare, and cook your bird can reduce the risk of making people ill.

Thawing

Turkey can be thawed safely in the fridge, microwave, on the counter or in cool water. If thawing in the fridge, make sure juices don't drip over ready-to-eat foods below. If thawing in the fridge, be prepared to let the turkey thaw for up to four days. If you choose to thaw your turkey in cool water, limit splashing as the water may contain pathogens. Whatever method you choose, **make sure the center of the turkey is thawed.**

You don't need to wash your turkey – it's risky
When washing, the pathogens can contaminate the sink, the faucet, other parts of the kitchen and your hands.

Cooking

The most important step when cooking your turkey is to ensure that the the meat has hit an internal temperature of **165F**. If you have stuffed the turkey, you must cook the stuffed bird until the stuffing is above 150°F. At this point, the breast is likely at 165°F, (**use your digital tip-sensitive thermometer**) and the thigh will be about 185°F, which is necessary to make this muscle tissue soft. Insert the thermometer 2 1/2 inches in the deepest portion of the turkey breast or into the inner thigh near the breast (see above picture). Make sure the thermometer does not touch a bone. When inserting the thermometer in the turkey breast, insert it from the side.

Preparation and equipment

Bacteria present on raw poultry can contaminate your hands, utensils, and work surfaces as you prepare the turkey. If these areas are not cleaned thoroughly before working with other foods, **bacteria from the raw poultry can then be transferred to other foods.** After working with raw poultry, always wash your hands, utensils, and work surfaces before they touch other foods.

Leftovers

Refrigerate leftover turkey within 2 hours of taking it out of the oven. Turkey should be cooled to 41 °F within about 14 hours by putting the sliced up leftover turkey in a 1 quart zip-lock bag and laying the bags flat on the shelf in the refrigerator.