

SEATTLE CANCER CARE ALLIANCE



Holiday Food Safety Information



Holiday Buffets

Did you know that the leading cause of foodborne illness is perishable food that has been held over 2 hours at room temperature so the temperature of the food is between 40°F to 140°F? This temperature range is referred to as the "danger zone". Hold hot foods at 140°F or higher and cold foods at 40°F or lower until serving time.

At events such as buffets or potlucks where food is set out for guests, avoid adding fresh foods to foods that have been setting out. Prepare a number of smaller platters and dishes ahead of time. Serve smaller bowls of food and set out fresh food bowls as needed. For added safety, put foods on ice or over a heat source to keep them out of the temperature "danger zone".

Late Arriving Guests

Avoid letting any cooked food, meat or poultry remain in the danger zone-- between 40°F and 140°F -- for more than two hours.

If you have hot foods in the oven, you may be able to hold them safely until your guests arrive. Put a meat thermometer in the thickest part of your roast or poultry, or in the center of your casserole. Adjust the oven temperature so that the food stays at an internal temperature of 140°F or above.

An oven temperature of 200°F to 250°F should be sufficient to hold the food. To prevent dryness, cover the dishes or wrap with aluminum foil. You should be able to hold food at least an hour without a loss of quality.

Handling Take-out Foods

First, take the food home immediately. Do not leave take-out foods at room temperature longer than two hours.

Refrigerate cold foods at 40°F or lower until serving time. See recommendations under "Handling Leftovers" on how to handle "thicker" foods, such as stews and layers of

meat slices, so they cool faster to a safe temperature. Reheat them later before serving -- heat until steamy hot throughout. If the food is hot, and you'll be eating within two hours, keep it hot (140°F or above) in a 200°F to 250°F oven. If you are picking up hot foods far in advance, refrigerate them. Remember to reheat before serving.

Traveling With Foods

When traveling with food or assigning foods to guests to bring, consider the type of food and the distance traveled. Cold foods should not be out of refrigeration for over two hours, including the time the food is left at room temperature during serving. Hot foods must be kept hot.

People traveling a long distance might bring non-perishables such as rolls, breads, and cookies. Those traveling an hour or less might more safely bring perishable foods. Wrap hot foods in foil and towels to keep warm. Place cold foods in a cooler with ice or gel packs. Plan to serve foods shortly after guests have arrived.

Refrigerating Pumpkin Pie

A pumpkin pie is a form of custard. Foods, which contain eggs, milk, and a high moisture content, like custard and pumpkin pie, must be kept refrigerated. Bacteria love to grow in these types of foods.

Avoiding Raw Cookie Dough

As much as you may want to nibble on your favorite cookie dough, it's best to wait until the cookies are baked. Uncooked eggs in cookie dough may contain harmful bacteria, such as salmonella.

This advice is especially important to those susceptible to foodborne illness - children, elderly, people with weakened immune systems.



Buying Turkey

Frozen	Frozen Pre-stuffed	Fresh	Pre-cooked
Buy in advance but keep frozen until 1-5 days before cooking. (See Thawing Turkey)	Buy in advance. Keep frozen until ready to cook. Do not thaw.	Buy 1-2 days before cooking. Do not buy pre-stuffed, thawed turkey.	Serve immediately within 1-2 hours of removal from oven.
1 lb. per person	1 1/4 lb. per person	1 lb. per person	1 lb. per person

Thawing Turkey

Thawing Time in the Refrigerator (Whole Turkey)	Thawing Time in Cold Water (Whole Turkey)	Thawing Time in the Microwave
8 to 12 pounds....1 to 2 days	8 to 12 pounds....4 to 6 hours	Check manufacturer's instructions for the size turkey that will fit into your oven, the minutes per pound, and the power level to use for thawing.
12 to 16 pounds....2 to 3 days	12 to 16 pounds....6 to 9 hours	
16 to 20 pounds....3 to 4 days	16 to 20 pounds....9 to 12 hours	
20 to 24 pounds....4 to 5 days	20 to 24 pounds....11 to 12 hours	

After thawing, remove neck and giblets. Wash the inside and outside of the turkey with cold water. Drain well. Wash hands, utensils, and all work areas with hot soapy water before and after contact with and handling of the raw turkey.

Stuffing Turkey

Recommendations for immunocompromised persons: Eat stuffing baked in a separate dish rather than baked inside the turkey. Internal temperature of the stuffing should be greater than 165 °F. For outside gatherings, request host set aside a portion for you following this method.

Stuffing in the Turkey	Stuffing Separate
Mix and stuff ingredients immediately before putting in the oven. Stuff lightly. Cooking time takes longer. Allow 3/4 cup stuffing per pound of turkey.	Bake stuffing in a greased, covered casserole dish during last hour while the turkey roasts.



Roasting Turkey

Weight (pounds)	Unstuffed (hours)	Stuffed (hours)
4 to 6 (breast)	1-1/2 to 2-1/4	Not Applicable
6 to 8	2-1/4 to 3-1/4	3 to 3-1/2
8 to 12	3-1/4 to 4	3-1/2 to 4-1/2
12 to 16	4 to 4-1/2	4-1/2 to 5-1/2
16 to 20	4-1/2 to 5	5-1/2 to 6-1/2
20 to 24	5 to 5-1/2	6-1/2 to 7
24 to 28	5-1/2 to 6	7 to 8-1/2

Place turkey breast-side-up on a rack in a shallow roasting pan. An oven/heat resistant meat thermometer can be inserted in the inner part of the thigh at this time. Do not add water. Cover turkey with loose tent of heavy-duty aluminum foil. Remove foil 20-30 minutes before roasting is done. At the end of the cooking time based on the included Turkey Roasting Table and using a meat thermometer, confirm that that recommended temperatures to assure turkey safety and doneness are attained - 180 °F in thigh, 165 °F in stuffing. Juices should be clear, not pink. When the turkey is done, remove stuffing. Let the bird stand 15 minutes for better carving and for juicier meat.

Storing Your Leftovers

Refrigerate or freeze leftovers promptly after eating. If food is left at room temperature for over 2 hours, bacteria can grow to harmful levels and the food may no longer be safe. Put the leftover foods into shallow dishes so the foods cool faster. For thicker foods -- such as stews, dressing, gravy, hot puddings and layers of meat slices -- limit the depth of food to 2 inches. Divide turkey into small portions and store in several small, shallow containers. Turkey will keep 3-4 days in the refrigerator. Use stuffing and gravy within 1-2 days.

Follow the same cooling guidelines for foods that are cooked ahead to be reheated at a later time. For greatest safety, eat leftovers in one to two days. Frozen foods will keep longer. Cool leftovers, uncovered, to allow heat to escape. Stir the refrigerated food occasionally to help it cool; use a clean spoon each time. Cover tightly when cooled. When serving leftovers, bring sauces, soups and gravies to a boil. Heat other leftovers thoroughly to 165 °F or until steamy hot throughout. For best quality, use frozen turkey, gravy and stuffing within one month.



For More Information

These call-in lines and Web sites offer advice and/or answer questions on food safety as well as providing general and holiday cooking tips and recipes. When accessing and using the guidelines and recipes from the listed resources, still be aware of and use the general food safety and diet principles recommended for immunosuppressed persons.

USDA Meat and Poultry Hot Line: 1-800-535-4555, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM weekdays year-round, 8:00 AM-2:00 PM. Thanksgiving Day; automated service available 24 hours a day. Online: www.foodsafety.gov.

Butterball Turkey Talk-Line: 1-800-BUTTERBALL, 8:00 AM-8:00 PM (CST) weekdays, Nov. 1 through Dec. 21. Home economists answer questions. Online: www.butterball.com

Honeysuckle White Holiday Help Line: 1-800-810-6325, 24 hours/day 7 days a week, Oct. 15 through Dec. 31. Automated assistance. General questions may be addressed year-round via Email to: tammy@honeysucklewhite.com. Online: www.honeysucklewhite.com

Reynolds Kitchen Turkey Tips Line: 1-800-745-4000, 24 hours/day 7 days a week, Nov. 1 through Dec. 31 (EST). Recorded message. **Reynolds General Information Help Line:** 1-800-433-2233, 9:00 AM-4:30 PM (EST). Online: www.reynoldskitchens.com

Fleischmann's Yeast Baker's Help Line: 1-800-777-4959, 8:00 AM-7:00 PM (CST) daily year-round, including holidays. Experts available to answer yeast baking questions. Online: www.breadworld.com

Land O'Lakes Holiday Bake Line: 1-800-782-9606, 8:00 AM-7:00 PM (CST) daily Nov. 1 through Dec. 24. Home economists answer questions. Online: www.landolakes.com

Empire Kosher Poultry Hot Line: 1-800-367-4734, 8:00 AM-4:30 PM (EST), Monday-Thursday, 8:00AM-3:00PM Friday, year-round. Online: www.empirekosher.com

Ocean Spray Consumer Help Line: 1-800-662-3263, 9:00 AM-4:00 PM (EST) weekdays year-round, including Thanksgiving Day (closed Christmas Day, New Year's Day and other major holidays). Online: www.oceanspray.com

Perdue: 800-473-7383, year-round (except Christmas Day), 9:30 AM-6:00 PM (EST) weekdays, 7:00 AM-4:00 PM Thanksgiving Day. Online: www.perdue.com

National Turkey Federation: Web site has information on turkey, food safety and recipes. Online: www.eatturkey.com

Potato Board: Recipes, tips and advice from celebrity chefs. Online: www.potatohelp.com.

Cook's Illustrated Turkey Help: The magazine runs the www.turkeyhelp.com Website with information on turkey, food safety and recipes, including side dishes and desserts.