



The Food Safety Times

Winter 2003



Grey Bruce Health Unit

"The way you cut your meat reflects the way you live." Confucius

It's Turkey Time! Ten Turkey Tips

It's that time of year again when we celebrate the holidays with our family, friends and of course, lots of food. You never know if the germs that may make you ill are on the meat you have bought because they are invisible and usually don't have an odour.

Follow these tips to make sure your turkey is prepared safely:

- Keep the turkey refrigerated.
- Allow plenty of time in the fridge to defrost the turkey (10 hours per kg or 5 hours per pound).
- Defrost the turkey safely on a platter on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator or under cold running water or keep the turkey in the packaging and set it in a sink of cold water, changing the water every half-hour. **NEVER** defrost the turkey on the counter or at room temperature; the outside of the turkey may become too warm while the inside of the bird is thawing.
- Cook the turkey to 74°C/165°F or higher. **NEVER** leave the turkey in your oven with the timer set to come on in a few hours. **NEVER** cook your turkey on low temperatures over a long period of time (i.e. overnight).
- Use a probe thermometer to check the internal temperature of the thickest part of the turkey (i.e. thigh).
- Separate cooked foods from raw foods.
- Cooking stuffing in the turkey is not encouraged; consider baking the stuffing outside the bird. Stuffing is an excellent place for bacteria to grow because it is dense, moist and tends to heat up and cool down slowly. If you choose to stuff your turkey, make sure the stuffing reaches an internal temperature of 74°C/165°F or higher. Stuff the turkey loosely (about ¾ cup of stuffing per pound of turkey).
- Clean up carefully; avoid cross contamination by washing and sanitizing anything the raw turkey or its juices have touched (i.e. cooking equipment, counter tops, utensils, cutting boards). To do this properly, use a bleach and water solution for sanitizing (¼ tsp. of bleach per 2 cups of water).
- Chill leftovers as soon as possible. If you want hot turkey leftovers, **reheat** to 74°C/165°F or higher.
- Handwashing!!! Remember to wash your hands before and after handling raw poultry. Always use liquid soap and warm water.

Storing Leftovers

- Cool the turkey leftovers quickly by cutting it off the bones within 2 hours of cooking.
- Chill stuffing and turkey separately and in shallow containers.
- Use leftovers within 2 to 3 days.

Use these food safety practices and the holidays will be a festive time that everyone can enjoy.

Donating Food: Do's and Don'ts

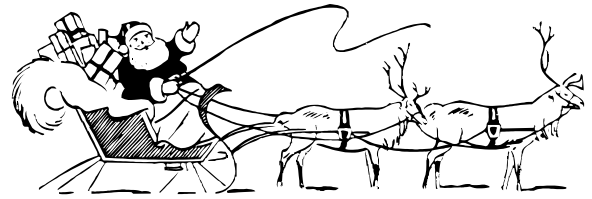
After enjoying the company, festivities and food over the holiday season, our bellies are full. What about those in need? Food banks are always looking for food donations. Why not share the holiday cheer by donating food and putting a smile on a family's face after they have enjoyed a hearty meal? The safest types of food donations are non-hazardous or non-perishable foods. When donating foods keep these tips in mind:

Do...

- Make sure foods are from approved sources.
- Check best before and expiration dates.
- Remember "When in doubt, throw it out".

Do not...

- Donate foods that have been cooked.
- Donate raw hazardous foods such as meats, eggs or milk.
- Donate foods that have been previously served to the public.
- Donate products that are from unregulated premises.
- Donate canned goods that are opened, swollen, spoiled or not labeled.



Safe Food Handling for Christmas

A poem by John Orr

'Twas the night before Christmas and all through the house
Not a creature was stirring except for a mouse,
Who knew that the turkey already stuffed in the cooler with care,
Was contaminated with Salmonella germs that shouldn't be there,
When into the kitchen came Mom with the platter,
To put the turkey into the oven to prevent a disaster.
The oven was pre-heated to 325°F, I'm told,
To thoroughly cook Old Tom to a beautiful gold.
Old Tom was shoved into the oven with care,
In hope that a Happy Holiday soon would be there.
The thermometer was inserted into the thickest part of the meat,
To make sure that the internal temperature was above 165°F (74°C),
When hours later Old Tom was done,
And the rest of the meal had long ago been begun,
The table was set by the family with care,
With the knowledge that loving family members would be there,
And after the meal all the turkey & dressing were cooled,
Because the safety of food is important, don't be fooled,
And all through the evening not a tummy rumble was heard,
'Cause food safety precautions had all been observed.

Merry Christmas To All

(Hope we catch that darn mouse tonight!)

