

# Turkey Food Safety



## TURKEY FOOD SAFETY

Food safety is a top priority for the turkey industry, and we take great pride in producing safe, nutritious and delicious food for American consumers.

It is important to remember that bacteria are naturally present in the environment and as a result, raw poultry products may contain bacteria.

The only way to remove all bacteria from food and make it safe to eat is through proper cooking. Turkey should never be eaten raw or even “rare.” Cooking turkey to an internal temperature of 165° F, as measured by a food thermometer, is recommended by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the National Turkey Federation.

Proper storage and handling must occur throughout distribution and preparation to ensure food safety is maintained. As with all fresh products, consumers should wash their hands and cooking utensils thoroughly, avoid cross contamination with other foods, cook food to a proper internal temperature and refrigerate promptly to prevent food safety problems.

These food safety tips will help protect you and your family from foodborne illnesses.

### Food Safety Tips:

**Wash hands** with soap vigorously before and after handling raw poultry.

Follow the five steps below to wash your hands the right way every time.

1. Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
2. Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Be sure to lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
3. Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
4. Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.

5. Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.

**Prevent cross-contamination** in the kitchen.

- Use separate cutting boards for raw meat and poultry and for fruits, vegetables and any other food that does not require cooking.
- Carefully clean all cutting boards, countertops and utensils with soap and hot water before and after preparing raw meats.
- Keep raw poultry separate from ready-to-eat foods.
- Don't rinse your turkey!

**Cook** turkey and all meats immediately after thawing.

- Use a meat thermometer to verify that the turkey has reached the safest internal temperature of 165° F.
- Temperature should be checked in at least three places: the innermost part of the thigh, the innermost part of the wing and the thickest part of the breast. If you stuffed your turkey, the innermost part of the stuffing should also reach 165° F.
- When cooking turkey burgers, use an instant-read food thermometer inserted into several parts of the patty – including the thickest part.
- Never place cooked burgers or ground poultry on an unwashed plate that was used for raw patties. Wash food thermometers in-between tests of patties that require additional cooking.
- Leftover foods or ready-to-eat foods (hot dogs and sausages) should be cooked until steaming hot.

**Refrigerate promptly** and properly.

- Refrigerate perishable foods within two hours.
- Freeze raw turkey that will not be cooked before the “use by date” on the packaging, or within two days of purchase.
- Thaw turkey in the refrigerator. Never thaw or marinate foods on the counter.
- Once cooked, slice cooked turkey off the bone (you can leave the leg and thigh intact), cover and refrigerate promptly.

Resources:

[Partnership for Food Safety Education - Fight Bac!](#)

[Food Safety.gov](#)

USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline: 888-MPHotline, 888-674-6854