

Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit
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www.pcchu.ca



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, October 5, 2011, Peterborough

Make Sure Your Thanksgiving is a Safe One!

Health Unit Offers Safe Food Handling and Storage Tips for Turkey

Cooked turkey is a central part of many holiday celebrations in Canada - especially Thanksgiving. The Peterborough County-City Health Unit would like to remind local residents of some steps they can take to help ensure their turkey feast is a safe one.

Adopting standard safe cooking and safe handling practices (clean, separate, cook and chill) reduces the risk to yourself and your family of getting sick from undercooked turkey and stuffing and from cross-contamination during preparation.

To reduce your risk of getting sick:

- Store your turkey in a leak-proof bag or container in the refrigerator or freezer immediately after you buy it.
- Thaw your frozen turkey in the refrigerator or in cold water.
- If you thaw your turkey in cold water, keep the turkey in its original wrapping and change the cold water regularly to ensure that the water remains cold.
- Don't rinse raw turkey. This can spread bacteria everywhere the water splashes, creating a safety hazard.
- Wash your hands carefully with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling raw poultry and clean and disinfect surfaces and kitchen utensils touched by raw or thawing turkey and its juices.
- Use a digital food thermometer, and cook turkey until the temperature of the thickest part of the breast or thigh is at least 85°C (185°F).
- Cook stuffing separately in its own oven dish or on the stove top. If you do stuff your turkey, stuff loosely just prior to roasting, and remove all stuffing immediately after cooking. Cook stuffing to a minimum internal temperature of 74°C (165°F).
- Cut the meat from the bones and refrigerate all leftovers in shallow pans within two hours of cooking. Use leftover turkey meat, stuffing, gravy and other cooked dishes within two to three days or freeze right away for later use.

NEWS RELEASE

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- When serving leftovers, gravy should be reheated to reach a full rolling boil and other leftovers should be reheated to at least 74°C (165°F). However, foods such as fully cooked turkey can be eaten cold.

Turkey poses particular food safety challenges because it can be contaminated with bacteria such as *Salmonella*, which can cause diarrhea, vomiting and stomach cramps.

It's estimated that there are approximately 11 million cases of food-related illnesses in Canada every year. Many of these illnesses could be prevented by following proper food handling and preparation techniques.

The Health Unit offers free safe food handling courses to all local residents. To find out when courses are offered and to register, please call (705) 743-1000, ext. 232.

More information about safe food preparation is available from:

The Government of Canada's [Turkey Food Safety Tips](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/turkey-dinde-eng.php)
(<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/turkey-dinde-eng.php>)

It's Your Health on [Poultry Facts](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/turkey-dinde-eng.php)
(<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/turkey-dinde-eng.php>)

It's Your Health on [Holiday Food Safety](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/holiday-fete-eng.php)
(<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hl-vs/iyh-vsv/food-aliment/holiday-fete-eng.php>)

The Government of Canada's [Food Safety Tips for Leftovers](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/leftovers-restes-eng.php)
(<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/leftovers-restes-eng.php>)

The Government of Canada's [Tips for Using Digital Food Thermometers](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/food-aliments-therm-eng.php)
(<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/securit/kitchen-cuisine/food-aliments-therm-eng.php>)

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