

November 2018



## Keeping Food Safe - Holidays and Every Day!

As the holidays approach, we all anticipate eating our favorite holiday foods. For many of us it is that traditional side dish that your Mother, Grandmother or maybe Grandfather made every year. Although food safety should be on our minds daily, the holidays are a good time to review food safety guidelines. Following a few simple rules will help keep our food safe to eat and avoid any food borne illnesses.

The four rules of food safety are:

- Clean – Wash hands and sanitize surfaces often
- Separate –Keep raw meats from other food items
- Cook –Cook to the right temperature
- Chill –Refrigerate food properly

### **Clean:**

Use hot water and soap to clean the sink, counter, cutting boards and all cooking utensils. You can also sanitize by using 1 tablespoon of bleach in 1 gallon of water. (Hint: Do this in the sink. You can sanitize your sink at the same time you are washing down your countertop.)

Wash your hands frequently. Wash your hands before food preparation and when you change tasks. Remember to wash your hands after using the bathroom, changing diapers or touching pets.

Have plenty of clean towels or paper towels on hand for meal preparation and clean up.

Clean and sanitize knives, cutting boards and other utensils after use.

### **Separate:**

Put all meat, poultry and seafood in plastic bags before placing them in your cart at the store.

Keep the vegetables and other food away from meat products to prevent cross-contamination by meat juices.

Clear a large enough space on the bottom shelf in your refrigerator to accommodate the turkey or other meats.

Store all fruits, vegetables and other refrigerated ingredients on the shelves above the bottom (turkey holding) shelf. Also put the turkey in a container to control any meat juices from touching other foods.

## Cook:

Cook the food to the proper temperature. Check in a cookbook or on line for instructions on how to properly test the food with a thermometer.

Do not use the pop up button on the turkey. Many times the button pops up before the turkey is fully cooked. Always test the internal temperature with a food thermometer.

Calibrate (set) your thermometer. **If you have a digital thermometer, you do not need to calibrate the thermometer. If you have a thermometer with a dial, you will need to make sure it is properly calibrated.** Check the instructions on the package or look online for instructions. It is very easy and very important that your thermometer is showing the correct temperature!

## Chill food properly:

Use a refrigerator thermometer to make sure your refrigerator is cold enough. Refrigerator temperature should register below 34-40 °s. Freezer temperature should be below 0°. The refrigerator thermometer should be placed in the top third of the refrigerator towards the back.

Put all refrigerated items into the refrigerator as soon as you get home. (The canned goods and shelf stable items can wait until later.)

After a meal, refrigerate left overs promptly. If the food has been left out over two hours, discard the food. Cover all leftovers to retain moisture

Reheat the food to the proper temperature.

## Defrosting your turkey:

**Do not thaw your turkey on the kitchen counter! This can cause food borne illness and contaminate the kitchen counter.**

**The best way to defrost your turkey is to place it in a container and place it on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator for several days before the holiday. A general guideline is to place it in the refrigerator for 24 hours for every 4-5 pounds.**

**If your turkey is not fully defrosted by the holiday, you can place the turkey – still in the wrapper - covered in cold water to defrost. Be sure to change out the water every 30 minutes to keep the turkey chilled.** Butterball© has a wonderful hotline to help with all your turkey questions. Simply call 1-800-Butterball or go to [www.butterball.com](http://www.butterball.com)