

## READY-PREPARED HOLIDAY TURKEY DINNERS Are They Safe?

Properly prepared and handled foods can assure a safe holiday meal. Follow these steps to make sure your meal is safe, as well as convenient.

### Hot From the Oven



#### ***Eating Within 2 Hours***

Pick up the food **HOT** ... and keep it **HOT**. Keeping foods warm is not enough. Harmful bacteria multiply fastest between 40° and 140°F. Set oven temperature high enough to keep the turkey at 140°F. or above. (Use a meat thermometer.) Stuffing and side dishes must also stay **HOT**. Covering with foil will help keep your food moist.

#### ***Eating Much Later***

It's not a good idea to try and keep the foods hot longer than 2 hours. They will be safer and taste better if you do the following.

- Remove all stuffing from the turkey cavity immediately and refrigerate.
- Cut turkey off the bone and refrigerate. Slice breast meat. Legs and wings may be left whole.
- Refrigerate potatoes, gravy and vegetables too — in shallow containers.

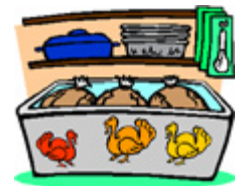
#### ***Reheating***

Reheat thoroughly to 165°F. until hot and steaming. Bring gravy to a rolling boil. In the microwave oven, cover food and rotate dish so it heats evenly. Inadequate heating in the microwave can contribute to illness. Consult your owner's manual for complete instructions.

#### **Cooked and Refrigerated**

##### ***Keep Cold Foods COLD***

Refrigerate as soon as you get home (always within 2 hours). Plan to serve your meal within 1 - 2 days.



##### ***Reheating a Whole Turkey is NOT Recommended***

If you plan to reheat a turkey, cut the meat off the bone. Slice breast meat. Legs and wings may be left whole. Refrigerate in shallow containers.

#### **EXCEPTION**

Cooked turkeys with the USDA inspection seal on the packaging have been processed under controlled conditions. Follow package directions for reheating and storing.

#### ***Transporting Holiday Dinners***

Use insulated or styrofoam picnic-type containers to keep foods at safe temperature from time of pick-up to home. Use separate containers — one for hot foods and another for cold foods.

### ***Reheating***

Reheat thoroughly to 165°F. until hot and steaming. Bring gravy to a rolling boil. In the microwave oven, cover food and rotate dish so it heats evenly. Inadequate heating in the microwave can contribute to illness. Consult your owner's manual for complete instructions.

### **PRECAUTIONARY NOTE**

Buying a refrigerated, fully cooked, stuffed turkey is NOT recommended.

### **DO YOU SEE THE USDA INSPECTION SEAL?**

This seal on the label tells you the turkey was prepared in a USDA inspected plant. Read and follow package directions for thawing, reheating and storing.

### **Cooked Frozen Turkey and Individually Wrapped Side Dishes**

#### ***No Directions On The Label***

Follow these steps:

- Thaw the wrapped, cooked frozen turkey on a tray in the refrigerator. Allow about a day for every 5 pounds. Small packages of stuffing, gravy, potatoes, etc. will thaw in less time. Side dishes can go from freezer to oven, if you like.
- Once the cooked turkey thaws, plan to eat it within 3 to 4 days (stuffing and gravy in 1 to 2 days). You may eat the turkey cold.
- If you plan to reheat the turkey, cut the meat off the bone. Slice breast meat. Legs and wings may be left whole. Refrigerate leftovers in shallow containers.

### ***Reheating***

Reheat thoroughly to 165°F. until hot and steaming. Bring gravy to a rolling boil. In the microwave oven, cover food and rotate dish so it heats evenly. Inadequate heating in the microwave can contribute to illness. Consult your owner's manual for complete instructions.