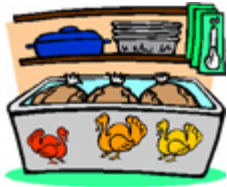


Consumers Urged to Handle Thanksgiving Turkey Carefully

Food Safety Specialists urge consumers to be cautious in how they handle turkey at Thanksgiving.



But with little care, people can ensure that their families are safe from illnesses that can be very serious. The following suggestions for making sure Thanksgiving is a healthy one for your family should be implemented.

- Thaw frozen turkey two or three days in the refrigerator before cooking. Not only will cooking a partially frozen bird increase cooking time, but an uncooked bird may harbor salmonella, a disease-causing bacteria.
- Any surfaces that come in contact with raw turkey or its juices, should be cleaned with hot, soapy water and sanitized with chlorine bleach solution (one teaspoon bleach in four liters of water). Utensils can be cleaned in a dishwasher or with the chlorine solution. Remember to always wash your hands after handling raw turkey.
- To monitor cooking, use a meat thermometer inserted into the center of the thickest part of the turkey - the breast. If there's stuffing inside the bird, measure the temperature of the stuffing instead. The temperature should read at least 140°F. for 15 seconds before the bird is considered ready to serve.
- Because stuffing inside a bird creates a larger mass to cook, stuffing prepared on a stove-top is preferable.
- After your meal, take the meat off the remainder of the bird and store it in shallow containers in the refrigerator. Putting the entire carcass in the refrigerator won't allow the meat to cool down quickly enough, possibly leading to bacteria growth.

Source: Press Release, Dr. Douglas Powell, Department of Plant Agriculture, University of Guelph, Ontario