

# LET'S TALK TURKEY



**Avoid uninvited guests like bacteria or viruses that can make people sick by using the following guidelines:**

## THE BIG THAW

To safely thaw your turkey use one of the following methods:

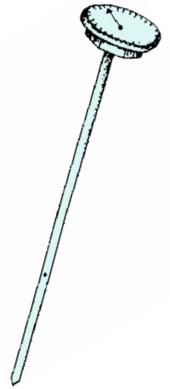
- ◆ In the refrigerator, a large bird may take 4 to 5 days to thaw under refrigeration. (Specific times are listed on the instructions of your turkey.)
- ◆ Under cold running water. **REMEMBER** – Keep your turkey cold while thawing.
- ◆ In the microwave oven provided the bird is placed **immediately** into the oven for cooking.
- ◆ Place the frozen turkey directly in the oven for cooking. Timetables should be listed on the turkey.

## MORE PEOPLE-MORE FOOD

The capacity of your refrigerator and oven are important considerations when planning and preparing your holiday meals. Prepare foods as close to the serving time as possible to the appropriate minimum temperatures (see back). **REMEMBER – keep cooked foods hot (135°F or above), and cold foods cold (41°F or below).** Large quantities of food can be difficult to keep hot or cold and take an extended period of time to cool even under refrigeration. **Refrigerate leftovers quickly!**

## TO STUFF OR NOT TO STUFF!

The USDA recommends that the stuffing be cooked **outside** the bird. Stuffing insulates the turkey and can prevent the turkey and stuffing from being cooked to the proper minimum temperature to ensure that germs are destroyed.



## TIMING'S "NOT" EVERYTHING!

Use a metal stemmed thermometer to be sure the turkey is cooked to a safe temperature. Insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh muscle without touching the bone.

A whole turkey is done when the temperature reaches 165°F.



**MCDH**

**McHenry County Department Of Health  
Division of Environmental Health  
2200 N. Seminary Ave  
Woodstock, Illinois 60098**

**For additional information call 815-334-4585**



## COOKING FOR THE HOLIDAYS!



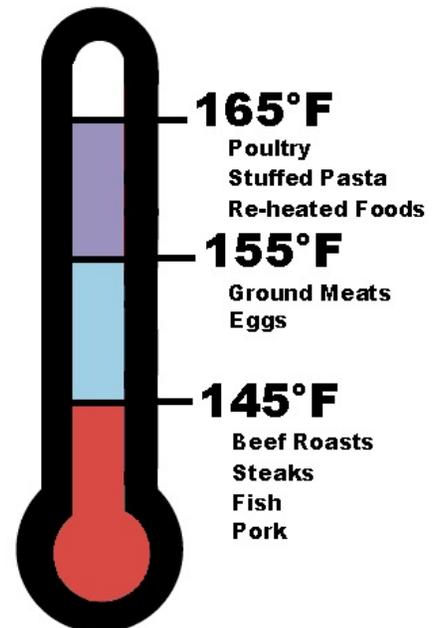
The holidays are filled with great food, family and friends. The following are tips to ensure that the food you prepare is safe.

- ◆ When grocery shopping, bring along a cooler to transport “cold foods” if the groceries will be in the car for an extended period of time.
- ◆ Be sure to wash your hands thoroughly with warm water and soap before and after handling food. 
- ◆ Thoroughly wash all equipment that has been used to prepare raw foods.
- ◆ To avoid contaminating prepared or ready to eat foods, store raw meats separate from or below other foods.
- ◆ Refrain from serving and eating foods that contain partially cooked or raw eggs (i.e. eggnog, mousse, etc.) unless they are made with a pasteurized egg product.
- ◆ Foods should be cooled from 135°F to 70°F or less within 2 hours and to 41°F or less within an additional 4 hours. Foods in shallow containers and smaller portions will cool more quickly.
- ◆ After foods have been cooked to the appropriate minimum temperature (see thermometer on right), keep cooked foods hot (135°F or above), and cold foods cold (41°F or below)!
- ◆ It is important to serve leftovers either very cold (directly from the refrigerator) or very hot (at least 165°F).
- ◆ Use a metal stemmed thermometer to make sure the center of the food reaches the proper internal temperature.

## USING YOUR THERMOMETER

A metal stemmed thermometer should be used for all cooked foods (not just meats). Metal stemmed thermometers have a metal probe, a dial face and are numerically scaled. They will read temperatures from 0 – 220°F, and can be purchased at grocery, hardware and department stores.

Insert the thermometer into the center of the thickest part (away from the bone) of the meat. When cooking casseroles and egg dishes, place the thermometer into the thickest portion, making sure the thermometer does not touch the bottom of the pan.



McHenry County Department Of Health  
Division of Environmental Health  
2200 N. Seminary Ave  
Woodstock, Illinois 60098  
815-334-4585  
www.mcdh.info