



News Release

Shelby County Health Department
814 Jefferson Ave., Memphis, TN 38105



NUMBER:

FOR RELEASE:

www.shelbycountyttn.gov

IMMEDIATE

DATE:

Monday, November 21st, 2011

CONTACT:

Phyllis McNeill
(901) 222-9203

Let's Talk Turkey - Safe Holiday Food Preparation

Memphis, TN - As we turn our attention to Thanksgiving and Christmas, the Shelby County Health Department offers seasonal tips for safe holiday food preparation. Below are some tips you can follow to ensure that your holiday meals are safe and enjoyable.

- Purchase hard frozen turkeys or fresh turkeys that are below 41 degrees.
- Separate turkeys from other foods in your refrigerator (especially raw or ready-to-eat foods) to avoid cross-contamination.
- Thaw frozen turkeys in the refrigerator on the bottom shelf, or submerged under cold running water in the sink at 70 degrees or below. Do not thaw in the sink or on the counter top at room temperature.
- After washing turkey and giblets, wash, rinse and sanitize all utensils, table tops knives, etc., used in the preparation of the turkey. Mix 1 tablespoon of household bleach in one gallon of water to make a sanitizing solution.
- For conventional oven or microwave cooking of the turkey, follow the **manufacturer's recommendations on weight, time and temperature**. The turkey should reach a minimum internal temperature of 165 degrees throughout. A dial type meat thermometer is recommended.
- Cook stuffing separately in a shallow pan to 165 degrees throughout, then stuff the turkey, if you desire, prior to serving.
- After cooking, turkey and stuffing should not remain at room temperature. Keep the foods hot at 140 degrees or cold at 41 degrees or below until serving time.
- When storing leftover turkey, it is important to de-bone the turkey and store in shallow pans. Re-pan the stuffing into shallow pans, and store the giblet gravy in

small containers to assure proper chilling in the refrigerator.

- Do not restrict the circulation of air in the refrigerator by overcrowding or excessively stacking pans. Do not line shelves with foil.
- When re-heating leftover turkey and fixings, it is important that all food reach a temperature of at least 165 degrees throughout to destroy possible disease carrying bacteria.
- Reheating must take place on top of the stove, in the oven, or in the microwave. Once the food items have all been re-heated to at least 165 degrees, they may be held on a steam table or in the oven at 140 degrees until ready to serve.

For more information on food safety, contact Phyllis McNeill, Shelby County Health Department - 901-222-9203.