



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Turkey Talk

Omaha, NE.....Food is a central focus at many holiday gatherings. It is no surprise during this busy time that many cooks take short-cuts. Therefore, the Nebraska Regional Poison Center sees an increase in food-borne illnesses during the holidays.

The major source of food poisonings is from improper handling, preparation, cooking and storage. Here are some suggestions to make your holidays safe.

DO ...

- DO** keep turkey in its original wrapping, refrigerated until ready to cook.
- DO** make sure the sell-by-date has not expired.
- DO** defrost a frozen turkey by refrigeration or a cold water bath.
- DO** allow one day for every 5 pounds to defrost in the refrigerator. In a cold water bath, change the water every 30 minutes. A 20 pound turkey will take 12 hours to defrost in cold water.
- DO** use a meat thermometer to check if turkey is done. The turkey should cook until the internal temperature reaches 180-185 degrees.
- DO** pierce the turkey in the thickest area of the thigh, making sure the juices run clear and are not pink.
- DO** remove the stuffing immediately after the turkey is cooked.
- DO** store the turkey and stuffing separately.
- DO** store leftover turkey in the refrigerator and use within 3-4 days.
- DO** store leftover stuffing and gravy in the refrigerator and use within 1-2 days.

DON'T...

- DON'T** defrost a turkey at room temperature. Bacteria can multiply on outer layers before inner layers have defrosted.
- DON'T** leave an uncooked thawed turkey out of the refrigerator longer than 2 hours.
- DON'T** partially cook the turkey one day and continue roasting the next day.
- DON'T** stuff the bird the night before cooking.
- DON'T** leave leftovers out on the counter longer than 3 hours.
- DON'T** store leftover stuffing in the turkey.
- DON'T** re-freeze a thawed uncooked turkey.

The Nebraska Regional Poison Center offers tips on Thanksgiving safety and poison prevention as a free community service. For more information, contact the Nebraska Regional Poison Center by calling (402) 955-5555 in the Omaha metropolitan area or toll-free at 1-800-222-1222.