

Let's talk turkey

With two thirds of UK households choosing to have roast turkey for their Christmas dinner, the Food Standards Agency (FSA) is offering tips on how to you can safely prepare turkey at home.

From buying turkey, right through to storing leftovers, there are a number of food hygiene tips that you can follow to protect your loved ones over the festive period.

Top turkey tips

- 1) When Christmas food shopping, take sufficient bags with you so that you can separate out raw and ready-to-eat foods to avoid cross-contamination.
- 2) Check the guidance on your turkey to ensure you have enough time to fully defrost it – it could take as much as 4 days.
- 3) Don't wash raw turkey; it just splashes germs onto your hands, clothes, utensils and worktops.
- 4) To work out the cooking time for your bird, check the instructions on the packaging. Check that: the meat is steaming hot throughout; there is no pink meat visible when you cut into the thickest part and meat juices run clear.
- 5) Whether you cooked your turkey from frozen or fresh, your turkey leftovers can be used to make a new meal (such as a turkey curry). This new meal can then be frozen, but make sure you only reheat it once.

Dr Kevin Hargin, Head, Foodborne Disease Control at the FSA, comments: "Every year, there are an estimated 1 million cases of food poisoning in the UK; the easiest way to protect your family this Christmas is to ensure you store and cook food safely.

"We have put together the 'Let's talk turkey' guide, which offers tips around chilling, cleaning, cooking and avoiding cross-contamination, while also explaining some of the science behind our advice."

Cllr Jonathan Wilkinson, Powys County Council's Cabinet Member for Environmental Health, said: "For many of us, it wouldn't be Christmas without turkey. However, cooking for a crowd can be a lot of pressure, from having to think about various defrosting and cooking times, to ensuring that all the food is stored safely. Raw and undercooked turkey can cause food poisoning and have serious consequences especially for children, people already in ill-health and older people.

"This is why Powys County Council are supporting the Food Standards agency in helping you to cook your festive bird with confidence this Christmas."

For more food safety information this Christmas, visit www.food.gov.uk/letstalkturkey or follow @foodgov #LetsTalkTurkey on Twitter for tips and advice throughout the festive period.

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