



Solano Family & Children's Services, Child Care Food Program

Volume 16 Issue 11 November 2018

Nutrition Nuggets



Avoid Guessing About Holiday Food Safety

During the upcoming holidays, thoughts turn to family, food and finding enough time to fit everything in! Food safety may take a back seat as we take short cuts, prepare foods ahead, cook late into the night and host numerous holiday feasts. Before you cook the turkey, set up the buffet or start making holiday goodies, see how you do on this holiday food safety quiz, based on information from the USDA and the FDA.

Approximately, how long should you allow for thawing a frozen turkey in the refrigerator? a. 24 hours per each 1–2 lbs. of turkey. b. 24 hours per each 4–5 lbs. of turkey. c. 24 hours per each 6–7 lbs. of turkey.

Answer: b. Place the frozen bird in its original wrapper in the refrigerator (40°F or below). Allow approximately 24 hours per each 4–5 pounds of turkey. A thawed turkey can remain in the refrigerator for 1–2 days. THAWING TIME IN REFRIGERATOR Size of Turkey Number of days: 4–12 lbs. 1–3 days, 12–16 lbs. 3–4 days, 16–20 lbs. 4–5 days, 20–24 lbs. 5–6 days.

What is a safe internal temperature for cooking a whole turkey? a. 145°F b. 155°F c. 165°F

Answer: c. Use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the turkey. A whole turkey is safe cooked to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F throughout the bird. Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing and the thickest part of the breast. If you have stuffed your turkey, the center of the stuffing must also reach 165°F.

For reasons of personal preference, you may choose to cook turkey to a higher temperature. All turkey meat, including any that remains pink, is safe to eat as soon as all parts reach at least 165°F. The stuffing should reach 165°F, whether cooked inside the bird or in a separate dish. Let turkey stand 20 minutes after removing it from the oven, remove any stuffing and carve the turkey.

Which of the following are important practices to follow if stuffing a turkey? a. Do not mix wet and dry ingredients for a stuffing until just before stuffing the bird. b. Stuff the turkey loosely. c. Cook a stuffed turkey immediately. d. Use a food thermometer. e. b, c, and d. f. All of the above.

Answer: f. Cooking a home-stuffed turkey is riskier than cooking one not stuffed. Even if the turkey itself has reached the safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F, the stuffing may not have reached a temperature high enough to destroy bacteria that may be present. Stuff it safely with these suggestions from USDA:

1. Prepare Stuffing Safely – If you plan to prepare stuffing using raw meat, poultry or shellfish, you should cook these ingredients before stuffing the turkey to reduce the risk of foodborne illness from bacteria that may be found in raw ingredients. The wet ingredients for stuffing can be prepared ahead of time and refrigerated. However, do not mix wet and dry ingredients until just before stuffing the turkey.

2. Stuff Loosely – Do not cool the stuffing before stuffing. Stuff the turkey loosely—about 3/4 cup of stuffing per pound. Do not stuff turkeys to be grilled, smoked, fried or microwaved.

3. Cook Immediately – Immediately place the stuffed, raw turkey in an oven set no lower than 325°F.

4. Use a Food Thermometer – For safety and doneness, check the internal temperature of the turkey and stuffing with a food thermometer. Continue to cook until both have reached a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.

5. Let It Rest—Let the cooked turkey stand 20 minutes before removing the stuffing and carving.

6. Refrigerate Promptly — Refrigerate the cooked turkey and stuffing within 2 hours after cooking. Place leftovers in shallow containers and use within 3–4 days. Reheat leftovers to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F.

What is the longest that perishable food should sit out at room temperature on a buffet table? a. 2 hours. b. 3 hours. c. 4 hours.

Answer: a. Foods should not sit at room temperature for more than two hours. Keep track of how long foods have been sitting on the buffet table and discard anything there two hours or more. Divide cooked foods into shallow containers to store in the refrigerator or freezer. This encourages rapid, even cooling. Reheat hot foods to 165°F. Hold hot foods at 140°F or warmer. On the buffet table you can keep hot foods hot with chafing dishes, slow cookers and warming trays. Cold foods should be held at 40°F or colder. Keep foods cold by nesting dishes in bowls of ice. Otherwise, use small serving trays and replace them.

Compiled by Alice Henneman, MS, RD, UNL Extension Educator. Printed with permission.

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Cheesy Corn Potatoes

3 medium potatoes 2 oz. reduced-fat Monterey Jack cheese, shredded
1 cup frozen sweet corn 3/4 t. salt-free seasoning blend

Poke holes in the potatoes with a fork. Microwave on HIGH until you are able to stick a fork in the potato and remove it easily (fork tender). Let cool. Remove skin and mash with fork. Mix with corn to blend. Transfer mixture to microwavable dish. Top with cheese. Microwave on HIGH for 30 seconds or until cheese is melted. Top with seasoning blend. Makes 6-8 vegetable servings.



From Cool Fuel Cookbook for Kids

Preventing Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

With the arrival of the fall and winter months, turning on the furnace and other appliances to keep our homes warm and cozy is inevitable. People often forget that using these appliances may increase the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning at home and childcare.

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a poisonous gas that is a byproduct of appliances, heaters and automobiles that burn gasoline, natural gas, wood, oil, kerosene or propane. CO has no color, no taste and no odor.

According to the American Academy of Pediatrics, unintentional carbon monoxide poisonings account for approximately 400 to 500 deaths and more than 15,000 emergency department visits in the United States annually.

Although carbon monoxide poisoning can be fatal to anyone, children, pregnant women and older adults as well as persons with chronic illness are particularly vulnerable. Children are always more susceptible due to their higher metabolic rates and because they breathe faster, inhaling more CO per pound of body weight than adults.

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning include headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain and altered mental status. Severe CO poisoning includes malaise, shortness of breath, irritability, ataxia (lack of voluntary coordination of muscle movements,) loss of consciousness, other neurological symptoms, coma and death.

The most important step to prevent CO poisoning related deaths is to install battery-operated or battery back-up CO detectors near every sleeping area in the home and check them regularly to be sure they are functioning properly.

Community Care Licensing and Health and Safety regulations require licensed family daycare homes and centers to have one or more carbon monoxide detectors and smoke detectors in the home/facility. Please refer to Health & Safety Code 1597.543 and 1596.954 for more detailed information.

Adapted from the American Academy of Pediatrics and HealthyChildren.org