



## NEWS RELEASE

### Public Health

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November 21, 2017

## Tips for a safe Thanksgiving meal

It is the time of the year when friends and family are together to give thanks for good fortunes and to enjoy a delicious Thanksgiving meal. If preparing the feast or just helping out in the kitchen, be sure to follow these helpful tips to prepare a safe Thanksgiving dinner. Guests will be thankful they did not get a foodborne illness.

**Handling and Thawing**—Always wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 15 seconds before and after handling the turkey. Fresh turkeys need no thawing and are ready to cook. Frozen turkeys can be purchased weeks in advance, but can require several days to thaw before cooking. If planning on purchasing a frozen turkey, first make sure there is sufficient space in the freezer for storage.

Never defrost the turkey on the counter. The safest way to thaw a turkey is in the refrigerator. When ready to thaw the turkey, make enough room for it in the refrigerator. Leave the turkey in the original packaging and place in a shallow pan and allow refrigerator thawing time at a rate of 4 to 5 pounds per 24 hours.

**Time to Cook**—Cook the turkey immediately after it is thawed. Do not refreeze. If purchasing a fresh turkey, cook it within a day or two. Insert a meat thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh, not touching any bone, and cook to a minimum internal temperature of 165°F. Check the internal temperature in the innermost part of the thigh and wing, and the thickest part of the breast as well. Cook stuffing separately in a casserole pan to a safe minimum internal temperature of 165°F or higher. If cooking stuffing in the turkey, ensure the turkey and stuffing both reach 165°F or higher.

**Storing Leftovers Safely**—Within two hours of taking the turkey out of the oven, store leftover turkey in shallow containers and put them in the refrigerator or freezer. Use cooked leftover turkey, stuffing and gravy within 3 to 4 days. When using leftovers, reheat the foods thoroughly to 165°F and bring gravy to a boil before serving.

For more information, contact San Bernardino County Department of Public Health Division of Environmental Health Services at (800) 442-2283 or visit our website at [www.sbcounty.gov/dph/dehs](http://www.sbcounty.gov/dph/dehs).

