



Top 10 Tips for a Safe Thanksgiving Dinner

California Poison Control Says, “No Thanks – Don’t Pass the Salmonella”

San Francisco, CA – November 18, 2015 – Thanksgiving is a joyful time for families to gather around the table to give thanks and celebrate. It’s also a likely time of year to send children and adults to the emergency room to be treated for food poisoning. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are nearly 76 million food poisoning cases yearly, with about 325,000 hospitalizations and approximately 5,000 deaths.

“Food poisoning is extremely preventable,” said Dr. Stuart E. Heard, executive director of [California Poison Control System](#) (CPCS). “By following simple handling, cooking and storage suggestions, families can stay healthy and enjoy Thanksgiving dinner, as well as the games and the nap that come after.”

Food poisoning generally causes stomach pain, vomiting and diarrhea, and usually appears within four to 12 hours after eating or drinking contaminated food or drink. For the elderly, children and infants, pregnant woman and people suffering from compromised immune systems, food poisoning can be severe and sometimes fatal. CPCS offers the top 10 safety tips for Thanksgiving.

1. Wash your hands often especially in between handling foods that are wet or dry.
2. Rinse fruits and vegetables thoroughly under cool running water and use a produce brush to remove surface dirt.
3. If you purchased a turkey fresh and not frozen, refrigerate it immediately. Do not rinse a turkey in water as that spreads salmonella. If you bought a frozen turkey, allow lots of time for it to thaw...24 hours of thaw time per five pounds of turkey. As the bird thaws, water will accumulate, so keep the bird in a high walled pan and do not let the water touch any other food. Store on a bottom shelf of the refrigerator.
4. It is safest to not stuff a turkey, but rather put herbs inside the cavity to season it. If you must stuff, use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of the

stuffing which must reach 165° F (which could make for a very tough bird, so best to do stuffing separately). Exotic stuffing with meat or shellfish (oyster) ingredients are risky. Always cook these on the stove top or in the oven, and not in the turkey.

After carving, remove all stuffing from the bird before refrigerating it.

5. The biggest risk of food poisoning comes from undercooking the turkey. You can't tell it's done by how it looks! While recipes give you hints about testing for doneness, such as a golden brown color or seeing juices run clear, these are not enough. The only way to make sure your bird is cooked sufficiently to be safe to eat is to measure the internal temperature with a meat thermometer. It must reach 165 degrees F.
6. It may not be in mom's recipe, but bring gravy to a full boil before serving.
7. Be sure to wipe down counters, cutting boards and utensils in between recipes especially if you have raw meat or leafy greens on the cutting board, both of which can carry salmonella. Use soap and hot water or, preferably, a sanitizer – especially if preparing to chop fruits or vegetables that will be served raw. Use different color cutting boards for meat vs. vegetables to avoid confusion.
8. Keep cold food like salads, gelatin molds and salad dressing refrigerated until just before serving. Once dinner is over, refrigerate leftovers. Food is not safe to eat if it has been sitting out for two hours or more. Toss it.
9. While store bought cookie dough and eggnog should be safe, be sure to purchase pasteurized eggs to use in homemade recipes.
10. After eating, take the remaining meat off the bird and store in a shallow container in the refrigerator. Don't put an entire carcass into the refrigerator — it won't cool down quickly enough.

Call California Poison Control System at 1-800-222-1222 for more information or any questions about poisons. Trained certified pharmacists, nurses and poison information providers are available to help 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The service is free, confidential and interpreters are always available. Follow CPCS on [Facebook](#) and on Twitter @poisoninfo. For more free home and family safety tips, text the word TIPS or AVISOS for Spanish to 69866. A *Choose Your Poison* game is available online at www.pillsvscandy.com.

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