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# MCHD HEALTH BLOG

*The greatest wealth of a community is the health of the people.*



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.  
MORGAN COUNTY HEALTH DEPT.



## THANKSGIVING FOOD SAFETY

Thanksgiving is almost upon us! Americans know Thanksgiving to be a holiday of giving thanks and feasting with family and friends. Morgan County Health Department wants you & your family to have a healthy and safe Thanksgiving weekend, especially as you spend time in the kitchen preparing a variety of sides, meats, desserts, and more. It is important to do everything you can to prevent food poisoning.

Thinking about cooking a turkey? Use these tips from [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov), to help you keep your family safe from food poisoning at home with four simple steps: clean, separate, cook and, chill:

1. **Clean:** Wash your hands frequently while handling food. Wash clean utensils and surfaces with hot, soapy water after they have touched raw meat. Unfortunately, bacteria can't be washed off the bird. Cooking it is the only way to destroy potentially dangerous bacteria.
2. **Separate:** Use separate cutting boards and plates for produce, meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs (especially if it's raw). In your fridge, make sure raw meat is secured in containers or leakproof plastic bags.
3. **Cook at the right temperature:** Food is safely cooked when the internal temperature is high enough to kill germs that can make you sick. Use a food thermometer to be sure your food is safe. Turkey is not safe to eat until it reaches 165°F. Check the temperature in the thickest part of the breast, the innermost part of the wing, and the innermost part of the thigh.
4. **Chill:** Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours. Leftovers are typically safe in the fridge for 3-4 days after they were first prepared. If you're traveling, be sure to pack them in a cooler. When reheating, make sure the temperature of the food reaches 165°F.

Curious to know more? Visit [www.foodsafety.gov](http://www.foodsafety.gov). You can also call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHOTLINE during business hours if you have specific questions about cooking your bird. The Hotline is open on Thanksgiving Day from 8am-2pm for last-minute questions. Happy Thanksgiving!