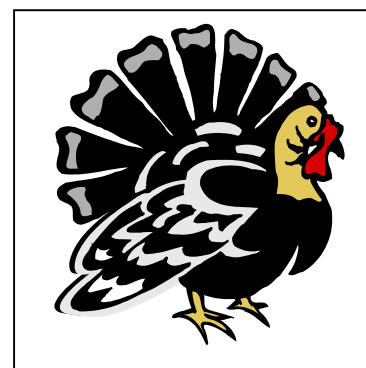




**GEDLING**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL



# TURKEY TALK

A GUIDE TO FOOD SAFETY WHEN SELECTING, STORING COOKING AND ENJOYING YOUR CHRISTMAS TURKEY.

During the Christmas season, we tend to eat richer foods and more of it!! We often provide larger meals for families and friends throughout this period. Christmas is a happy time for many people, but it can soon become miserable if your festivities are affected by food poisoning.

Improperly thawed and cooked poultry is a common cause of food poisoning, the risk being greater at Christmas due to the increased consumption of poultry. Most food safety is common sense and it's very easy to avoid the risk of food poisoning by following the simple rules set out in this handout.

## BUYING TURKEY

*Turkey may be bought –*

**Fresh:** The bird should smell fresh, particularly in the body cavities and in folds of skin, and blood should be deep red, not brown.

**Chilled:** As with fresh. Place in the refrigerator as soon as possible after purchase and cook within 48 hours.

**Frozen:** Make sure the pack is solid when purchased and place into your home freezer as soon as possible.

## STORING YOUR TURKEY

Fresh and chilled turkey should be refrigerated as soon as possible after purchase at between 1°C and 4°C and cooked within 48 hours of purchase. Frozen poultry should be stored in a freezer at minus 18°C or colder.

### **Beware:**

When storing chilled or defrosting turkey in the refrigerator, it should be stored below cooked foods. This is to prevent meat juices, which contain germs, dripping onto other foods. This transfer of germs is best known as CROSS CONTAMINATION.

## THAWING YOUR TURKEY

Frozen turkey should be thawed thoroughly before cooking. (See chart on thawing times). Turkey is thawed when the flesh is pliable, the legs flexible and the body cavity free of ice crystals. Giblets should be removed as soon as possible during or after thawing. Thawed frozen turkey should be cooked within 24 hours.

## PREPARING AND COOKING YOUR TURKEY

The turkey should be thoroughly rinsed before cooking. (Refer to chart for cooking times). Stuffing should preferably be cooked separate to the turkey or if you prefer, stuff the neck end only.

Test that the turkey is cooked by inserting a skewer into the thigh. If the juices run clear the turkey is cooked. If juices are pink, cook for a little longer then check again.

If the turkey is to be eaten cold, it should be cooled within 1½ hours (by removing meat from the bone) and refrigerated at less than 4°C above and away from raw food. Remember that this rule applies to gravy made from turkey juices too!

## CLEANING SURFACES AND UTENSILS

It is very important that after handling raw turkey, hands, surfaces and utensils are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected to remove food poisoning bacteria. Remember that tea towels and wiping cloths may also become contaminated with germs and must also be washed and disinfected.

### CHART SHOWING APPROXIMATE THAWING AND COOKING TIMES FOR A WHOLE TURKEY

#### THAWING TIMES – THAW BELOW 60°F/15°C

OVEN READY WEIGHT	NUMBER OF SERVINGS	THAWING TIMES
3 – 5 lb	4 – 6	20 hrs
6 – 7 lb	7 – 9	30 hrs
8 – 9 lb	10 – 14	36 hrs
10 – 11 lb	15 – 16	45 hrs
12 – 13 lb	17 – 18	48 hrs
14 – 17 lb	19 – 25	48 hrs
18 – 22 lb	26 – 37	48 hrs

**\* Always read the label on the turkey packaging for the correct weight of the product**

#### CHART SHOWING COOKING TIMES AT 190°C/375°F/GAS MARK 5

OVEN READY WEIGHT	WITHOUT FOIL hrs/mins	WRAPPED IN FOIL hrs/mins
3 – 5 lb	1.30 – 1.45	1.45 – 2.00
6 – 7 lb	1.45 – 2.00	2.00 – 2.15
8 – 9 lb	2.00 – 2.30	2.30 – 2.45
10 – 11 lb	2.15 – 2.45	2.30 – 3.00
12 – 13 lb	2.45 – 3.00	3.00 – 3.15
14 – 17 lb	3.15 – 3.30	3.30 – 3.45
18 – 22 lb	3.30 – 3.45	3.45 – 4.00

**\* Always read the label on the turkey packaging for the correct weight of the product**

May The Staff Of Gedling Borough Council, Food/Health and Safety Section,  
wish you a Happy Christmas and a prosperous New Year

Acknowledgements to: Isle of Anglesey Borough Council, British Turkey Information Service & Trading Standards.

\*The times given above are approximate and you should always read the manufacturers instructions.