



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Holiday cooking safety tips**

Environmental Health of the Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department gives some turkey cooking safety tips for Thanksgiving.

"We want all of the Mid-Ohio Valley to enjoy their Thanksgiving dinner - and their health - by following food safety guidelines," said Nicole Needs, EH director.

Turkeys should thaw in the refrigerator, 24 hours for every 5 pounds. A cold water bath may be used for 30 minutes per pound. The turkey should NEVER be thawed in hot water or left out on the counter.

Washing or rinsing your turkey increases the risk of spreading germs to other food.

Stuffing the turkey is not recommended - it takes longer to cook to the proper temperature of 165-degrees for both bird and stuffing. Cook the stuffing in a separate dish.

Cook turkeys breast-side up at a minimum of 325-degrees. If you choose to use an oven bag, use manufacturer instructions for how long to cook. Approximately, it should take:

- 8-12 pound turkey: 1 1/2 to 2 hours
- 12 to 16 pound turkey: 2 to 2 1/2 hours
- 16-20 pound turkey: 2 1/2 to 3 hours
- 20-24 pound turkey: 3 to 3 1/2 hours

The turkey must reach 165-degrees as measured by a food thermometer. Check the temperature in the thickest part of the breast, innermost part of the thigh and the innermost part of the wing.

Refrigerate any leftovers within 2 hours of cooking to prevent food poisoning. Cut turkey into smaller pieces to cool quickly. Use leftover turkey and any dishes made with it within 3 days. Freeze turkey to store it for longer. Reheat leftovers to at least 165-degrees.

If you have questions, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Friday, at 1-888-674-6854. You can also chat live at [ask.usda.gov](http://ask.usda.gov). On Thanksgiving Day, the hotline is available from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department serves Wood, Wirt, Calhoun, Pleasants, Ritchie and Roane Counties. It is located at 211 Sixth St. in Parkersburg. The offices are open 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Call 304-485-7374 or visit the website, [movhd.com](http://movhd.com) for more information. Follow them at Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department MOVHD on Facebook and [@MOVHealthDept](https://www.instagram.com/MOVHealthDept) on Instagram and Twitter.