



Knox County Health Department

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 9, 2021

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Let's Talk Turkey

KCHD gets ready for Thanksgiving by talking about food safety

Knoxville, Tenn.— Thanksgiving is quickly approaching! To make sure your Thanksgiving meal is prepared safely, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) Food Protection Division is offering food safety advice. Taking the necessary steps toward safe food handling and sanitation will help protect you and your loved ones this year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 48 million people get sick from foodborne diseases each year in the United States. Follow the guidance below to reduce the likelihood of foodborne illness this holiday season.

Cleaning: Wash your hands between kitchen tasks and sanitize food contact surfaces often. Always wash for 20 seconds with soap and water after handling raw foods and before eating. The CDC recommends rinsing fresh fruits and vegetables; however, do NOT place raw turkey under running water. Washing raw meat and poultry can cause bacteria to spread up to three feet away. Turkeys may contain Salmonella and Campylobacter, harmful pathogens that are only destroyed by properly preparing and cooking the turkey.

Separate: Keep raw meat, seafood and eggs away from the ready-to-eat foods. This includes keeping these items separate in the grocery store, refrigerator and cutting boards.

Cooking: Thaw frozen turkeys safely in the refrigerator, in cold water or in the microwave. Never thaw foods on the counter because bacteria multiply quickly in the parts of the food that reach room temperature. Use a thin tipped, metal stemmed thermometer in the thickest portions of the meat to ensure that you have at least reached an internal temperature of 165 degrees.

Chilling: Make sure to refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours after cooking. Leftovers are safe in the fridge for 3-4 days or in the freezer for 2-6 months.

For more information, visit KCHD's Food Protection Division [webpage](#) or call 865-215-5200. This division promotes food safety year-round through its partnerships with operators and employees of food service establishments. There are 11 health inspectors who monitor approximately 2,134 food service establishments; 489 schools, daycares, and hotels; in addition to 559 swimming pools and tattoo parlors.

About Knox County Health Department

The first health department in Tennessee to achieve national voluntary accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board, the Knox County Health Department (KCHD) is dedicated to ensuring the conditions in which every resident can be healthy. As a chief health strategist for the community and with more than 240 team members, KCHD's broad scope of work includes convening partners to improve community health, identifying community health threats, investigating disease



outbreaks, conducting extensive outreach and education, preparing for public health emergencies, providing and connecting the public with medical care, enforcing food safety and air quality laws, and more. For more information, visit www.knoxcounty.org/health.

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