

Avoid the unwanted gift of food poisoning this Christmas

To save you and your loved ones from a nasty bout of food poisoning over the holidays, follow our advice:

1. When Christmas food shopping, take enough bags with you so that you can separate out raw and ready-to-eat foods to avoid cross-contamination.
2. Check the guidance on your turkey to ensure you have enough time to fully defrost it – it could take as many as 4 days.
3. Don't wash raw turkey - it just spreads germs further by splashing them onto your hands, clothes, utensils and worktops.
4. To work out the cooking time for your bird, read the instructions on the packaging. Check that: the meat is steaming hot throughout, there is no pink meat visible when you cut into the thickest part and meat juices run clear.
5. Whether you cooked your turkey from frozen or fresh, your turkey leftovers can be used to make a new meal (such as a turkey curry). This new meal can then be frozen, but make sure you only reheat it once.

Adam Hardgrave, Head of Foodborne Disease Control at the Food Standards Agency, said:

'The four Cs of food hygiene: Chilling, Cleaning, Cooking and avoiding Cross-contamination are important throughout the year, but especially at Christmas.

'In the flurry of preparing the Christmas meal, it's important to plan ahead and allow plenty of time. Remember that an average-sized turkey can take 4 days to fully thaw in the fridge. It is vital to thoroughly cook your turkey so that the meat is steaming hot, there is no pink meat visible, and that the meat juices run clear.

'Cooking a Christmas roast for a large gathering can be a challenge. The turkey, or other meat of the meal, should be stored, defrosted and cooked correctly. Likewise, leftovers from Christmas need to be reheated and consumed within specific timeframes in order to avoid food poisoning.'

Visit [Season's Eatings](#) for more Christmas food safety advice.