



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**KEEP GUESTS HEALTHY DURING THANKSGIVING FEASTS BY FOLLOWING  
IMPORTANT FOOD SAFETY TIPS**

*Ohio Turkey Farmers Share Proper Turkey Handling Tips to Ensure Safe, Healthy Holiday*

**COLUMBUS, Ohio (November 19, 2019)** – It’s no surprise that more turkey is consumed during Thanksgiving than any other time of the year. Families across the United States will gather to give thanks and enjoy homemade feasts that will feature a combined total of [690 million pounds of turkey](#). To ensure turkeys are properly prepared, the [Ohio Poultry Association](#) (OPA) is sharing important food safety tips to keep families healthy this Thanksgiving.

“Because turkey is the centerpiece of most Thanksgiving dinner tables, there is no greater reason to take extra precaution to make sure it’s prepared correctly” said Jim Chakeres, OPA executive vice president. “By following a few simple food safety steps, Ohioans can protect their friends and families from foodborne illness this Thanksgiving.”

Ohio home cooks can keep Thanksgiving guests healthy by keeping these food safety tips in mind when preparing the turkey and packing up leftovers:

- Thaw frozen turkeys in the refrigerator, never at room temperature. Whole turkeys thaw at a rate of 4 to 5 pounds per 24 hours. For example, a 15-pound frozen turkey will take about 3 to 4 days to completely thaw in the refrigerator.
- Never rinse the turkey! If a raw turkey is rinsed, bacteria can be spread to other foods and surfaces in the kitchen. Instead, cook the turkey to an internal temperature of 165°F to kill any bacteria that might be present.
- Thoroughly wash hands with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds and ensure all cooking surfaces have been thoroughly cleaned before and after touching raw poultry.
- Prevent cross-contamination by keeping raw turkey separate from other foods and using separate utensils when preparing the turkey.
- Pack leftovers in shallow, airtight containers and refrigerate within 2 hours of cooking. Refrigerated leftovers should be eaten within 3-4 days or frozen and enjoyed within 3-4 months.

Ohio turkey farmers know that food safety is a shared responsibility, which is why they work hard before Thanksgiving and year-round to responsibly raise safe, wholesome and high-quality turkey for families to enjoy. Ohio ranks ninth nationally in turkey production with more than 280 million pounds of turkey produced each year.

For more information and additional recipes, visit [www.ohioturkey.com](http://www.ohioturkey.com) or [www.serveturkey.org](http://www.serveturkey.org).

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