

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information, contact Holly Miner

Nutrition, Food Safety and Health Agent, Wildcat Extension District

haminer@ksu.edu, (620) 331-2690

Thaw that Turkey Safely!

Are you in the mood for turkey this Thanksgiving? It will soon be time to start purchasing food for tasty meals with family and friends. This year start thawing that turkey early. There are three ways to thaw your turkey safely: in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave oven.

In the refrigerator (40 °F or below):

Allow approximately 24 hours for every 4 to 5 pounds

- 4 to 12 pounds = 1 to 3 days
- 12 to 16 pounds = 3 to 4 days
- 16 to 20 pounds = 4 to 5 days
- 20 to 24 pounds = 5 to 6 days

Keep the turkey in its original wrapper. Place it on a tray or in a pan to catch any juices.

In Cold Water:

Allow approximately 30 minutes per pound

- 4 to 12 pounds = 2 to 6 hours
- 12 to 16 pounds = 6 to 8 hours
- 16 to 20 pounds = 8 to 10 hours
- 20 to 24 pounds = 10 to 12 hours

Wrap your turkey securely, making sure the water is not able to leak through the wrapping. Submerge your wrapped turkey in cold tap water. Change the water every 30 minutes. Cook the turkey immediately after thawing.

In the Microwave Oven:

- Check your owner's manual for the size turkey that will fit in your microwave oven, the minutes per pound and the power level to use for thawing.
- Remove all outside wrapping.
- Place on a microwave-safe dish to catch any juices that may leak.

- Cook your turkey immediately. Do not refreeze or refrigerate your turkey after thawing in the microwave oven.

Remove the giblets from the turkey cavities after thawing. Cook separately.

No matter which of these safe methods you use to thaw your bird, always cook poultry to an internal temperature of 165⁰ F to reduce the risk of a food borne illness from undercooked meat.

For more information about cooking turkey, visit

<https://www.foodsafetynews.com/2022/11/usda-advice-clears-turkey-confusion-before-thanksgiving/> to view Food Safety News article, “USDA advice clears Turkey confusion before Thanksgiving.”

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