

Poultry Safety

How to handle and cook poultry safely



HANDLING

- Before and after handling raw poultry, wash hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds.
- Do not wash raw poultry to prevent spreading poultry juices and contaminating foods, utensils, counters and sinks.
- Prevent cross-contamination by using separate cutting boards and utensils for raw poultry.
- While transporting raw poultry, keep in its own bag or place below other foods.

DEFROSTING

- Refrigerator – Place frozen poultry on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator to thaw overnight.
- Cold Water – Place frozen poultry in a leak-proof plastic bag and submerge the bag in cold water. Cook immediately after thawing.
- Microwave – Cook poultry immediately after thawing in microwave.
- **It is unsafe to defrost frozen poultry at room temperature.**

COOKING

- Use a food thermometer to check cooked poultry has reached an internal temperature of at least 165°F.
- Consume cooked leftovers within 3-4 days and reheat to 165°F before serving.
- Poultry defrosted in the refrigerator may be refrozen before or after cooking. If thawed by other methods, cook poultry before refreezing.

STORING

- Cook or freeze raw poultry within 1-2 days.
- Do not let frozen poultry thaw until you are ready to cook it.
 - Allow at least 24 hours to defrost for every 5 lbs of frozen poultry before cooking
- Store in freezer up to:
 - 3-4 months: ground poultry
 - 9 months: chicken or turkey, pieces
 - 12 months: chicken or turkey, whole

