

November 19, 2018

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **As a turkey salmonella outbreak continues to sicken Americans, SCPHD reminds residents to use proper cooking techniques this holiday season.**

**SOUTH CENTRAL IDAHO, Nov. 14, 2018** — At last count, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report one person has died, and another 164 people are sick, after contracting salmonella from raw turkey products. This includes one person who fell sick in Idaho.

South Central Public Health District (SCPHD) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Food Safety urge residents to take precautions in their kitchen to keep their families safe and illness-free.

“Thanksgiving is a wonderful time for friends and families to get together and eat lots of food,” said Josh Jensen, SCPHD Public Health Program Manager. “Food safety is something everyone can practice; we want people to have a memorable Thanksgiving for the right reasons, not because they got sick from eating food.”

Food poisoning is a serious public health threat. The CDC estimates that millions of people suffer from foodborne illness each year, resulting in roughly 128,000 hospitalizations and 3,000 deaths.

“Don’t cut corners and put your family at risk for foodborne illness by forgetting to wash your hands after handling the raw turkey,” said USDA Acting Deputy Under Secretary for Food Safety Carmen Rottenberg. “Always remember to use a food thermometer to be sure it’s cooked to 165 degrees.”

To help your guests avoid getting sick this Thanksgiving, follow these simple steps:

### **20 seconds of hand washing**

The CDC recommends washing your hands with soap and running water for at least 20 seconds. Handwashing is especially important when handling raw meats, both before and after touching the meat. Without proper handwashing, bacteria can accidentally be spread around the kitchen.

**Say no to ‘bird baths’**

Say no to ‘bird baths.’ That is, do not rinse or wash your turkey. Doing so can spread bacteria around the kitchen, contaminating countertops, towels and other food. Washing poultry doesn’t remove bacteria from the bird. Only cooking the turkey to the correct internal temperature will ensure all bacteria are killed.

**Take an accurate temperature inside, cook the stuffing outside the turkey**

Don’t rely on those pop-up thermometers to determine if your turkey is safe! Take the bird’s temperature with a food thermometer in three areas — the thickest part of the breast, the innermost part of the wing and the innermost part of the thigh — and make sure all three locations reach 165°F. If one of those locations does not register at 165°F, then continue cooking until all three locations reach the correct internal temperature. In recent USDA research, 88 percent of participants did not cook their poultry to the safe internal cooking temperature of 165°F.

**Use the two-hour rule to avoid foodborne illness**

Everyone loves to graze during Thanksgiving, but when perishable food sits at room temperature, it is sitting in a temperature range where bacteria love to multiply. This is known as the ‘danger zone.’ If foods have been left out at room temperature for more than two hours they should be discarded.

**Call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline**

If you have questions, call the Health District at 208-737-5900 or the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) to talk to a food safety expert.

For more information visit: [FoodSafety.gov](http://FoodSafety.gov), our website, or follow us on Facebook and twitter for #foodsafety tips. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/salmonella/reading-07-18/index.html> to see the latest on the turkey salmonella outbreak.