



T is for Turkey

*Presented by the Dietitians of Froedtert & Community Memorial
Tracey Brand, RD*

Four wild turkeys were served as part of the first Thanksgiving feast in 1621, starting a tradition that has endured to this day. Turkey breast is the leanest of all meats, supplying just 135 calories and less than 1 gram of fat per 3.5 ounce skinless serving (as with chicken, almost all of the fat is contained in the skin).

Turkey is high in the nutrients for which meat is known. It is not only an excellent source of protein, but also of niacin, vitamin B6, vitamin B12, and phosphorus. It also has good amounts of iron, zinc, riboflavin, and magnesium.

Turkey is a very popular cold cut. Unfortunately they are not as lean as turkey itself. A number of them are made from dark meat and some brands contain high cholesterol organ meats. As a result, these cold cuts are often high in fat and almost always high in sodium. Look for cold cuts that have one gram or less of fat per ounce (at least 95% fat free by weight). Turkey bologna & salami tend to be nearly as rich in fat as their beef counterparts. Turkey breast cold cuts are low in fat but they are not solely composed of turkey – the meat has been processed & filled with additives. The fat content of the cold cut depends on whether it is made primarily from dark or light meat: it contains gelatin, sugar, & other fillers. Sliced fresh turkey from the Deli counter is a healthier option.

Food Poisoning symptoms are very similar to the common flu & become very common over the holidays. By following these common sense food handling rules, you can greatly minimize the risk this Thanksgiving.

1. Wash your hands with soap and water as hot as you can stand it for at least 30 seconds before serving food.
2. Change utensils, gloves and dishes when changing functions to avoid cross contamination. For example, if you have just stuffed a raw turkey, it is important to clean or change the cutting board before cutting vegetables for a fresh vegetable tray.
3. Sanitize the food preparation area. Use paper towels during prep, serving and clean up.
4. Leftovers? When in doubt, throw it out. Refrigerate or freeze leftovers promptly in small containers.
5. Thaw foods in refrigerator or microwave. Never thaw foods at room temperature. Cook foods immediately after thawing.
6. Never leave hot food out for over 2 hours or cold food out for over 4 hours.
7. Frequently change kitchen towels and sponges since these can harbor bacteria.
8. Be careful not to use the same cutting surface for meats and vegetables.
9. Don't try to save time by prestuffing a turkey, even if you plan to refrigerate it. Stuff the bird right before you cook it.
10. Turkey should never be cooked at temperatures lower than 325 degrees.

