

## Christmas Safety Tips



Christmas is a time when your home is likely to be full of people and it is in the excitement of the season that accidents can easily happen.

Follow these safety tips to help prevent your festivities being cut short by a trip to casualty:

- Make sure you buy children's gifts for the correct age group and from reputable sources that comply with standards (e.g. The Toys (Safety) Regulations 2011)
- Remember to buy batteries for toys that need them - that way you won't be tempted to remove batteries from smoke alarms
- Look out for small items that could pose a choking hazard to young children, including parts that have fallen off toys or from Christmas trees, button batteries and burst balloons
- Keep decorations and cards away from fires and other heat sources such as light fittings.
- Don't leave burning candles unattended, make sure you put them out before going to bed and do not put candles on Christmas trees
- If you have old Christmas lights, seriously consider buying new ones, which will meet much higher safety standards, keep the lights switched off until the Christmas tree is decorated, don't let children play with lights (some have swallowed the bulbs), and remember to switch off the lights when going out of the house or going to bed. Never overload electrical sockets
- Remember, Christmas novelties are not toys, even if they resemble them, and they do not have to comply with toy safety regulations. Give careful thought to where you display them, for example, place them high up on Christmas trees where they are out of the reach of young hands



- Give yourself enough time to prepare and cook Christmas dinner to avoid hot fat, boiling water and sharp knife accidents that come from rushing, and keep anyone not helping with dinner out of the kitchen. Wipe up any spills quickly.
- Have scissors handy to open packaging, so you're not tempted to use a knife, and have screwdrivers at the ready to assemble toys
- Beware of trailing cables and wires in the rush to connect new gadgets and appliances, and always read instructions
- Slips, trips and falls are the most common accidents so try to keep clutter to a minimum. Make sure stairs are well-lit and free from obstacles, especially if you have guests
- Make sure your guests know how to escape in the event of a fire
- Plan New Year fireworks parties well in advance and follow the Firework Safety Code, keep a bucket of water handy
- Do not drink and drive, and plan long journeys so you won't be driving tired.

## Turkey and Christmas Dinner Food Safety Tips:



- Make sure that you have enough fridge and freezer space and that your fridge temperature is running between 0 and 5°C. This can be easily checked with an inexpensive fridge thermometer.
- If you buy a frozen bird ensure that it is allowed time to properly defrost, if it's still partially frozen the recommended cooking times won't be long enough to cook it thoroughly leading to survival of bacteria and potential food poisoning.
- Defrosting should be carried out either in the refrigerator or in a cool room. A good guide for defrosting in the fridge is 12 hours per kg, and in a cool room (15°C) is 7 hours per kilo. An 8 kg (17.5 lb.) turkey will take 4 days to thaw in the fridge. At the end of thawing a look inside the body cavity should reveal no ice crystals, also the legs should not be stiff but move freely - if there are still ice crystals and/or the legs are a little stiff, more defrosting time will be required (always follow the instructions on the packaging). Make sure it doesn't touch other foods and the dish used is large enough to collect the liquid.
- For roasting it is recommended that birds are cooked for 40 minutes per kg at 190°C. As such, an 8kg bird will take 320 minutes (5h 20 min). Follow any instructions on the packaging.
- Never part cook poultry the night before.
- Ensure that the turkey is thoroughly cooked, part the skin between the leg and breast, if it's still a little pink then allow extra cooking time. Juices should run clear not pink. When you cut into the thickest part of the turkey, none of the meat should be pink.
- If you prefer to use a temperature probe or food thermometer, ensure that the thickest part of the bird (between the breast and the thigh) reaches at least 75°C for 30 seconds.
- Vegetables need to be handled and prepared properly too, always wash hands thoroughly before and after handling raw food. Unless packaging says "ready to eat" you must wash, peel or cook vegetables before eating.
- Wash hands thoroughly in hot soapy water before preparing food and especially after touching raw meat and other raw foods.
- Clean equipment and surfaces thoroughly after preparing raw foods and before contact with other foods. Use an anti-bacterial sanitizer.
- Always store cooked or ready to eat foods on a higher shelf than raw foods in the refrigerator. Remember raw food includes vegetables.
- It is not necessary to wash your turkey as adequate cooking will kill any bacteria and by washing the bird you may spread bacteria, via splashing, throughout your kitchen.



- Don't leave leftovers sitting around as food poisoning bacteria can grow and multiply. Cool any leftovers quickly, ideally within two hours before putting in the fridge. To speed cooling divide the food into smaller portions and put on a cooling rack (such as the rack from a grill pan).
- Avoid re-heating food more than once.
- If you do reheat leftovers ensure that they are piping hot.
- Ideally don't keep leftovers for more than 2 days.
- If you want to keep leftovers longer than two days, you can freeze them instead. Cool leftovers before putting them into the freezer and use within one month. Once defrosted, don't refreeze the leftovers.