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## Six Thanksgiving Food Safety Tips from the Michigan Restaurant Association and MichiganFoodSafety.com.

**LANSING, MI** – The Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) estimates that more than 14,000 Michiganders enlist the help of restaurants for their Thanksgiving feast by dining out or using takeout, but cooking at home remains popular during this holiday. The experts at the MRA offer food safety tips for holiday meals to ensure an enjoyable holiday with family and friends.

“Food safety is a priority year-round,” said Justin Winslow, CEO and President of the Michigan Restaurant Association. “Food and cooking are a big part of holiday celebrations, and with our partner michiganfoodsafety.com and ServeSafe, putting food safety practices in focus this time of year will help ensure a safe and enjoyable experience. Whether cooking at home or in a professional foodservice kitchen, basic principles like cleaning and sanitizing, and cooking to proper temperatures should be part of everyone’s food safety knowledge base.”

The food safety tips recommended by the MRA for preparing a Thanksgiving meal:

- 1. Thaw your turkey in the fridge.** While you can thaw a frozen turkey under running water, the best way is in the refrigerator overnight (or longer). Be sure to follow the instructions on the package.
- 2. Store raw turkey away from ready-to-eat food.** Make sure your raw turkey is covered and stored in a leak-proof container on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. You want to keep it away from foods that are ready to eat, such as desserts and salads, to avoid the risk of cross-contamination.
- 3. Clean and sanitize your sink and counters.** Properly clean and sanitize all surfaces before starting to prepare any other food the turkey touches.
- 4. Cook your turkey to safe internal temperature.** Use a properly calibrated meat thermometer to check that your turkey has reached an internal temperature of 165 degrees. Insert the thermometer to the dimple on the stem in the thickest part of the breast and thigh for accurate readings.
- 5. Keep cold foods cold and hot foods hot.** Prep salads, cranberries and other colds items first and store them in the fridge until ready to serve. Prepare your hot dishes closer to serving time so they stay hot. Keep all food items outside the “temperature danger zone” (41 to 135 degrees) as much as possible.
- 6. Safely reheat leftovers.** Whether from a meal prepared at home or picked up from a restaurant, leftovers are part of the holiday tradition. Store each dish separately in clean, sealable, leak-proof containers and reheat to 165 degrees when you’re ready to enjoy round two of your Thanksgiving meal.

For more information and tips on food safety, visit [michiganfoodsafety.com/consumers](http://michiganfoodsafety.com/consumers).

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***Michigan Restaurant Association (MRA) is the recognized leader of Michigan's hospitality industry, providing essential services to the foodservice community. Founded in 1921, the MRA represents approximately 4,500 Michigan foodservice establishments. The industry plays an integral role in Michigan's economy, employing more than 421,500 people and generating \$15.4 billion in annual sales.***