

# November Ground Safety

## Safety Tips for Your New Turkey Fryer

Turkey Day is almost here, and you've finally decided to join the hordes of Americans enjoying a tasty, deep-fried whole turkey this Thanksgiving. But do you know how to use your new turkey fryer safely? **Remember, deep-fried turkeys were invented by large clans of inbred Cajuns, who could easily afford to lose a few of their extra fingers and toes - or even family members - to catastrophic explosions. The rest of us have to be more careful. The following tips will help you:**

- Have a fire extinguisher, your insurance information, and the name of a good personal injury lawyer nearby.
- Set up your fryer outdoors, away from anything you would really miss if it burned to the ground.
- Carefully connect the fryer to a grounded, 120-volt outlet, using a heavy duty extension cord. Make sure no one can trip over the cord. If you have an extra extension cord, you can use it to tie up all your family members and pets to keep them away from the first extension cord.
- Fill the fryer with five gallons of high-grade cooking oil. If you don't have high-grade cooking oil, you can use something similar, like kerosene. TIP: Spraying the inside of the fryer with PAM will not work.
- Heat the oil to the proper temperature. Since most turkey fryers do not have thermostats, use this simple test: If the skin on your thighs blisters when you stand next to the fryer, it is probably hot enough.
- Carefully place the thawed turkey in the fryer. The oil will spill over the edge of the fryer, contact the fryer's heating coils, and ignite, sending the entire apparatus up in flames. This is normal. You should wear safety goggles.
- Run away from the fryer screaming until the flames subside. This will take about fifteen minutes for a ten-pound turkey, or five minutes per pound for a larger turkey.
- If burning oil splashes on your clothes or apron, don't run. Stop, drop, and roll. You should roll for about five minutes for a ten-pound turkey, or three minutes per pound for a larger turkey.
- If you forget to stop, drop, and roll, you may spread the flames to others in the area, immolating your entire family. This indicates that your turkey fryer is functioning properly. Immolation will take from ten to twenty minutes, depending on the size of your family.

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- When the turkey is done, carefully remove it from the hot oil. We have no idea how you can do this safely; you'll have to figure it out by yourself.
- Unplug the fryer and let it cool for about six weeks. Do not approach within fifty feet of the fryer during this time.
- Drain off and save the used oil. Your attorney may want to use it as evidence.



## **YOU CAN PREVENT FOOD POISONING**

Food poisoning is a great master of disguise. You could be up half the night with a headache and nausea and think that you've caught the flu or a virus that's going around. However, a lot of people who think they have the flu are really suffering from a mild case of food poisoning, caused by tiny living organisms called bacteria and viruses. Foodborne illnesses affect millions of Americans each year. You can reduce your risk of getting food poisoning by following the guidelines presented.

Precautions are especially needed when foods are served to people in high-risk categories who are particularly vulnerable to infections: the very young, the elderly, pregnant women (because of risk to the fetus), and people already seriously ill or whose immune systems are weakened. For these people, careful observance of all food handling guidelines is essential because foodborne illnesses may be life-threatening.

Preventing food poisoning starts when you buy food at the supermarket. Keep food safety in mind as you store, prepare, cook, and serve food at home. Food poisoning prevention can be simplified into three rules: keep food clean, cook food adequately, and keep hot food hot and cold food cold.

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## CAUSES OF FOOD POISONING

Most foodborne illnesses are caused by eating food that contains certain types of bacteria or viruses (germs). After the food is eaten, these living microorganisms continue to grow, causing an infection. Foods can also cause illness if they contain a toxin or poison produced by bacteria growing in the food.

Several different kinds of bacteria can cause food poisoning. Two similar groups of them, called Salmonella and Campylobacter, are normally found in warm-blooded animals such as cattle, poultry and swine. These bacteria may be present in raw meat, poultry, eggs, or unpasteurized dairy products. These same foods, as well as vegetables and other crops that come in contact with the soil (such as herbs), may also be the source of a bacteria called Clostridium perfringens. Growth of this organism may occur when foods such as stews, soups, or gravies made with meat, fish, or poultry are stored improperly or left at room temperature for longer than 2-3 hours. Listeria, a newly recognized problem, is mainly associated with raw foods of animal origin. Staphylococcus or Staph organisms occur normally on human skin and in the nose and throat. These bacteria can be transmitted to food when handled. When perishable foods (such as custards or salads containing meat, poultry, or eggs) are kept under improper temperature conditions and Staph are present, the bacteria may grow to unsafe numbers and produce toxin.

Hepatitis A and some other viral diseases may be transmitted through foods. The virus is passed from the intestines of infected persons onto the hands of food handlers or into sewage. Any food subject to fecal contamination may cause hepatitis A or other foodborne viral illnesses. Washing hands thoroughly after using the toilet and cooking shellfish and other foods which may have been exposed to sewage-contaminated water are essential measures to avoid transmission of viral diseases through food.

Botulism is a rare but deadly kind of food poisoning. The bacteria that cause it, Clostridium botulinum, are found naturally almost everywhere--including soil and water. They become dangerous when environmental conditions (low oxygen and low acid) allow them to multiply and produce toxin. Low-acid foods (such as meat, fish, poultry, or vegetables) that are improperly canned may be breeding grounds for these bacteria. The toxin may also be produced in low-acid cooked foods left at room temperature too long such as baked potatoes or pot pies.

## KEEP FOOD CLEAN

Bacteria are a natural part of the environment. Be careful to keep things clean--especially your hands. Keep pets out of areas where food is prepared. Also teach children to wash their hands before handling food. Discourage anyone with an infectious disease from handling, preparing, or serving food. When handling food:

- Work with clean hands, clean hair, clean fingernails, and wear clean clothing.
- Wash hands with soap and water after using the toilet, assisting anyone using the toilet, or changing diapers.
- Wash hands with soap and water after smoking or blowing your nose
- Wash hands with soap and water after touching raw meat, poultry, seafoods or eggs, before working with other food.

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- Avoid using hands to mix foods when clean utensils can be used.
- Keep hands away from mouth, nose, and hair.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with disposable tissues and wash hands thoroughly afterward.
- Avoid using the same spoon more than once for tasting food while preparing, cooking, or serving.
- Thoroughly clean all dishes, utensils, and work surfaces with soap and water after each use. It is especially important to clean equipment and work surfaces that have been used for raw food (such as meat, poultry, or seafood) before you use them for cooked food. This prevents the cooked food from becoming contaminated with bacteria that may have been present in the raw food. Bacteria can be destroyed by rinsing utensils and work surfaces with a solution of 1 tablespoon (about 1 capful) of chlorine laundry bleach to 1 gallon of cool water. Cutting boards, meat grinders, blenders, and meat slicers particularly need this treatment.

## **COOK FOODS ADEQUATELY**

Bacteria such as Salmonella, Campylobacter and Listeria can live in the intestinal tracts of animals. Cooking animal products thoroughly will destroy these bacteria. It is risky to eat rare meats or poultry, raw or lightly cooked fish and shellfish, raw milk, and foods made with raw or lightly cooked eggs.

Meat and poultry should be cooked to the temperatures listed in Table 1. Make sure that meat and poultry are cooked all the way through by using a meat thermometer. For whole poultry, insert the tip of the thermometer into the thickest part of the thigh next to the body, or cook until the juices run clear when the bird is pricked with a fork.

Rare beef is popular, but since it is cooked to only 140°F, some food-poisoning organisms may survive.

Game meat frequently has a high bacterial content because it has been handled in less sanitary conditions than domestic meat. Cook all game meat to at least 160°F (medium doneness) to kill any food-poisoning bacteria that may be in the meat.

Pork must be cooked to at least medium doneness (160°F) to destroy a harmful parasite, *Trichinella spiralis*, that may be present in raw pork and a few other meats, like bear. This worm causes trichinosis in humans and animals.

Raw fish may also contain parasites which can cause human illness. Cook fish until it flakes and loses its translucent (raw) appearance (140°F).

Shellfish may pick up bacteria and viruses from contaminated waters. These microorganisms may then be transferred to anyone who eats the shellfish without cooking, so eating raw or lightly cooked shellfish is not recommended.

## **KEEP HOT FOOD HOT, COLD FOOD COLD**

Like other living things, bacteria need food, warmth, moisture, and time to grow and multiply. In order to prevent bacteria from growing, keep hot foods HOT (above 140°F) and cold foods

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COLD (below 40°F). Food may be unsafe if held for more than 2-3 hours at 60-125°F, the zone where bacteria grow rapidly. Remember to include all time involved during preparation, storage, and serving. For example, holding foods for several hours in an automatic oven prior to cooking is not safe if the food is in the temperature zone of 60-125°F for more than 2 or 3 hours. Table 2 summarizes the temperatures needed to control the growth of bacteria in foods.

## Temperature of food for control of bacteria

Take care with perishable foods before you get them home, also. When shopping, pick up the perishables as your last stop in the grocery, and--especially in hot weather --get them home and into the refrigerator quickly. Don't leave them in the car while you run other errands. If you live more than 30 miles from the store, consider using an ice chest for the trip home.

The colder food is kept, the less chance bacteria have to grow. Use a thermometer to make sure your refrigerator is giving you good protection against bacterial growth. The refrigerator should register 40°F or lower.

In most cases, prompt cooling and proper refrigeration of foods can hold the number of bacteria to a safe level. Hot foods may be refrigerated promptly if they do not raise the temperature of the refrigerator. Keep them in the refrigerator until served or reheated. Speed the cooling of large quantities by refrigerating in shallow containers. If this is not possible, put the container of food into cold water. Stir and replace the cold water frequently over a 30-minute period. Then refrigerate.

Supervisors brief your shops and document briefing on a Form 703.

V/R,

CAP-USAF Safety Dude