Thanksgiving is a time for families to gather and enjoy each other - not suffer from food poisoning! Here are a few tips to keep your family healthy:

- The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) recommends thawing the turkey in the refrigerator. It takes 24 hours for every 5 pounds of turkey, not including the day you cook it. Therefore, a 20-24 pound turkey would take 6 days to thaw.
- Do not stuff your turkey. Place stuffing in a separate bowl to cook.
- USDA recommends an oven temperature no lower than 325°F for cooking a turkey along with using a thermometer to make sure the thickest part of the turkey reads 165°F. A 20-24 pound turkey may take about 5 hours to cook.
- Avoid cross-contamination by using separate cutting boards, plates, and utensils when handling raw turkey. Wash items that have touched raw meat with warm soap and water, or place them in a dishwasher.
- Refrigerate leftovers within two hours to prevent bacteria from growing on the food. Eat leftovers in the refrigerator within 3-4 days. Use the freezer to store leftovers for longer periods.
- Do not over-fill your refrigerator, as it causes it to work too hard and may not keep it at 40 °F or below.

Sources:
1. Thanksgiving Food Preparation and Food Safety Tips, Nebraska Extension: [https://go.unl.edu/hmvg](https://go.unl.edu/hmvg)
2. Turkey, Foodsafety.gov: [https://go.unl.edu/fsvr](https://go.unl.edu/fsvr)
3. Thanksgiving, Foodsafety.gov: [https://go.unl.edu/zpac](https://go.unl.edu/zpac)