



# Family Matters

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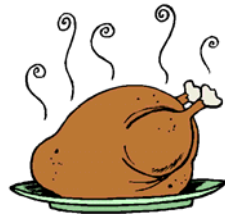
A Family Newsletter prepared by Iowa State University Extension Family Specialists

## Lets Talk Turkey

### The Big Thaw

Turkeys must be kept at a safe temperature during thawing. While frozen, a turkey is safe indefinitely. However, if the turkey is allowed to thaw at room temperature, any harmful bacteria that may have been present before freezing can begin to grow again unless proper thawing methods are used.

There are 3 safe methods to thaw food - in the refrigerator, in cold water, and in the microwave oven.



In the refrigerator, allow about 24 hours for every 5 pounds of turkey. Allow about 30 minutes per pound when thawing a turkey in cold water. Be sure the turkey is in leak-proof packaging and change the water often (every 30 minutes) to make sure it is staying very cold. Follow manufacturer's directions for thawing in the microwave and then cook immediately. Many turkeys are too large for the microwave so this may not be a reasonable method.

### Safe Handling of Prepared Meals

Whether for Thanksgiving or other times of the year it is a challenge to keep store-prepared meal items safe. Pick up the food HOT and keep it HOT. Set oven temperature high enough to keep the cooked turkey at 140 degrees or above (use a meat thermometer). Stuffing and side dishes can be covered in foil in the oven to keep the food moist.

It's not a good idea to try and keep the foods hot longer than 2 hours. They will be safer and taste better if you:

- Cut turkey off the bone, slice meat, and refrigerate potatoes, gravy and vegetables in shallow containers.
- When ready to eat, reheat foods to 165 degrees (hot and steaming). Bring gravy to a rolling boil.

## Helpings and Servings—What's the Difference?

A **helping** is the amount of food you choose to eat.

A **servicing** is a standard amount used to help give advice about how much to eat and to identify foods with similar amounts of calories and nutrients.

Think about your spaghetti meal. Many adults would have 2 cups of spaghetti on their plate, about 3 ounces of meat in their 1 cup of sauce and 2 slices of garlic bread on the side. According to the Food Pyramid, that would amount to 4 servings of spaghetti plus 2 servings for the slices of bread for a total of 6 servings in the Grains group of the pyramid. Tomato sauce would be 2 nutritional servings of vegetables and 1 serving of meat.

That is not overeating for a meal - but it means that for other meals during the day a person needs to eat more of other food groups to have a balanced diet. Note that even though the person just had 1 helping of spaghetti it added up to several servings. **How much** we eat as well as **what** we eat is important to a healthy diet.

## Comparison Shopping Pays Off

Even though comparison shopping is one of the most basic ways to save money, a report issued earlier this year indicates that *only about half of all consumers shop around*, often because they believe it won't make any difference. However, the same report shows that comparison shopping does pay off.

Those surveyed indicated that the time and effort of comparison shopping would be worthwhile if it would save 10% of a product's cost; this applied for products including gasoline, car insurance, color TVs, new or used cars, and long distance phone service. For other products (including car rentals, plane tickets and life insurance) the survey respondents said that comparison shopping is worthwhile only if savings is 25% or more.

In a related study, researchers examined how much can actually be saved by shopping around. **For many products, the savings greatly exceeded 10-25%.** For color televisions, savings was over 20%; for plane tickets, savings was more than 50%. Clearly, shopping around pays off better than many consumers realize.

Another way to look at the payoff is to compare the *time* spent in comparison shopping with the amount of money saved. In many cases, shopping around

### Is Cost the Only Factor?

When shopping for a product, cost is obviously an important consideration. Does that mean that the less-expensive product is always better? *No.*

**Quality.** It may be worth paying more for a product because it has the taste we like, or a feature that is important to us. If we want a product to last a long time, then we may decide it is worth paying more for high-quality materials or construction. On the other hand, poor quality may be just fine for an item that will only be used once or twice.

**Local Business.** It is common for consumers to choose to shop in their own town, to support the local economy, even if they could spend less elsewhere.

**Service and Warranty.** Paying a little more may be worthwhile if it gives you a stronger warranty or access to on-going repair service.

can be done quite easily, by phone or on the internet. Study examples included: spending 16 minutes to save \$100 on a color TV; spending 21 minutes to save \$26 on a two-day car rental; and spending 15 minutes to save \$139 on an airline flight.

Consider how those savings translate into hourly wages: \$375/hour; \$74/hour; and \$556/hour! If comparison shopping was a job, we would all be standing in line to apply!

*Source: Consumer Literacy Coalition, Consumer Federation of America*

[www.consumerfed.org/041603compare.html](http://www.consumerfed.org/041603compare.html)

## Important Holiday "Paperwork"

Holiday preparations can leave us frazzled and disorganized. Paperwork may be the last thing on our minds, but there is at least one kind of paperwork that needs special attention during the holiday season – and it isn't wrapping paper!

During the hustle and bustle of holiday shopping, it's easy to lose track of the important "paperwork" related to the gifts you purchase.

Receipts and credit card charge slips are important if you need to return or exchange items after the holidays. Keeping receipts and charge slips is also important to help track spending and stay within your gift giving budget.



To help track purchases, tuck an envelope in your purse or pocket when shopping -- use the envelope for storing these important slips of paper. It's a simple and practical solution for keeping holiday receipts together.

Here's another paperwork tip for keeping your spending within your budget: keep a running tally of purchases on credit cards, so you don't exceed your credit limit OR your ability to repay! Make a *post-shopping* list -- a list of everything you have purchased. List the gift recipient, what you purchased and the cost. That way, at any time you'll know how much you've spent and what gifts you still need to select.

## Family Traditions: Holiday Help or Hindrance

Family gatherings, cooking or baking special food items, gift exchanges, religious observances, community events—these are just some traditions associated with the holidays. Traditions can be an important way to celebrate and enjoy time as a family, *or* they can become sources of frustration and stress. Reflecting upon your traditions before the busy season begins can help determine which category they fall into. As families change and grow, traditions may need to take new forms as well.

List all of your holiday family traditions. Be specific! A gift exchange, for example, may involve a number of traditions in itself...a day of shopping, a particular type of gift involving the same people each year, a family meeting to organize the exchange, a particular setting. Note on this list which activities feel overwhelming or discouraging to think about. Ask all family members about their attitudes regarding these activities.

Now consider whether these family traditions are serving any of the following functions:

1. Builds identity as a group and reaffirms each person (“Our family always trims a tree as a way to have fun together. Each person has their own favorite ornaments.”)
2. Transmits family culture from generation to generation (“Our family makes cookies from an old, handed down Danish recipe from our ancestors.”)
3. Provides ways of expressing important family values (“Our family shares with the food pantry each year as a way of giving to others.”)
4. Helps family members define important roles and responsibilities (“Our family begins each Thanksgiving dinner with Dad saying grace.”)
5. Brings sense of joy or satisfaction (“Our family loves participating in the midnight candlelight service at church.”)



How does your list line up with the real purposes and advantages of keeping traditions? Are there some events or activities that are stealing time and joy from the season? If so, can these be eliminated or modified? Delegating or simplifying can be strategies to make traditions more enjoyable and manageable.

Family traditions can be valuable, pleasurable ways to enrich the holidays when they are approached thoughtfully. Remember: “This is the way we’ve always done it!” is an attitude that may actually interfere with true celebration and enjoyment. Choose traditions which serve each member of your family well and add to the joy and meaning of the season.

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### **Water needs vary with size**

The average amount of water recommended for an adult is eight 8-ounce glasses, but it does vary with body size. You can calculate your water needs by taking your weight in pounds divided by 2 which equals the ounces of water needed per day. Greater than 200 pounds equals 100 ounces. Children weighing less than 100 pounds have special fluid needs and this formula may not be appropriate.