



MEDIA RELEASE

OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR GLENN JACOBS

400 Main Street, Suite 615, Knoxville, TN 37902

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Contact: Mike Donila Abbey Harris
215-4750 office 215-4579 office
306-1177 cell 705-1681 cell

Thanksgiving Safety Tips from Knox County

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. —Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires, according to the National Fire Protection Association. So, with the big feast only a few days away, Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs has teamed up with the Knox County Fire Prevention Bureau to demonstrate turkey fryer safety.

Watch the video [here](#).

Also, see below for an extensive list of safety tips from the Knox County Health Department and Fire Prevention Bureau, as well as information on proper food waste disposal from Knox County Solid Waste.

Please note, COVID-19 testing at the Knox County Health Department will close at noon on Wednesday, Nov. 25 and the Public Information Line will close at 1 p.m.

All Knox County Government offices—including the Knox County Health Department, public libraries and convenience centers—will be closed Thursday, Nov. 26 and Friday, Nov. 27 in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

KCHD will not test or operate the phone bank over the holiday, but daily case count updates and positive case notifications will continue. Other standard COVID-19 response activities will resume on Friday, Nov. 27 and continue as normal through the weekend.

The Knox County Public Libraries and Knox County's Solid Waste Convenience Centers will begin operating on a regular schedule on Saturday, Nov. 28.

COVID-19

Traditional Thanksgiving gatherings with family and friends are fun but can increase the chances of getting or spreading COVID-19 or the flu. The safest way to celebrate this year is with your household or immediate family. If you choose to do otherwise, take appropriate steps to celebrate safely.

- Wear a mask so that it covers your nose, mouth and sits securely under your chin and fits snugly against the sides of your face.
- Stay at least 6 feet from people who do not normally live with you as some people without symptoms can spread COVID-19 and/or the flu.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds and keep hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol with you if you are unable to wash your hands.

- Use single-use options, like salad dressing and condiment packages, and disposable/recyclable food containers, plates and utensils.
- Limit the number of guests and consider eating outdoors if weather permits.

Thanksgiving Meals

- Food Prep
 - Wash your hands with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds before and after handling food, especially raw meat.
 - Sanitize food-contact surfaces after preparing each food item and before beginning the next.
 - Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly.
 - Use separate cutting boards for meats, seafood and other foods that will be cooked, as well as ready-to-eat foods such as raw fruits and vegetables.
 - Do not rinse raw meat or poultry before cooking; it can spread bacteria.
 - Do not put cooked meat back into a container that previously held raw meat.
- Cooking:
 - Use a food thermometer to ensure meat has reached a safe internal temperature.
 - The turkey is done when the temperature reads 165 degrees for 15 seconds in the thickest parts of the meat of the thighs, wings, legs and breast.
 - If you choose to cook your stuffing inside the bird, the internal temperature of the stuffing also needs to be verified with a probe thermometer and have reached 165 degrees for 15 seconds to be served safely.
- Storage and Leftovers:
 - Refrigerate leftovers within two hours of serving.
 - Set refrigerator no higher than 40 degrees and the freezer no higher than 0 degrees.
 - Hot casseroles and gravies can make your refrigerator struggle to keep the correct temperature. Let hot foods cool at room temperature or in an ice bath to 70 degrees or below before storing in the refrigerator.
 - Never defrost food at room temperature. A 20-pound frozen turkey needs two to three days in the refrigerator to thaw completely, so plan accordingly. Cold running water and the microwave may also be used to thaw food, but food defrosted in this manner should be cooked immediately.

Waste Disposal

- Never pour oil or grease down residential drains or any public storm drains; this can cause costly problems for your home's plumbing and municipal sewers.
- To avoid rodents and other pests around your trash, consider taking Thanksgiving Day food waste to one of Knox County's seven Solid Waste Convenience Centers.
- Recycle used vegetable oil (stored in a closed, non-glass container) for free at seven Knox County Convenience Center locations:
 - *Carter Convenience Center* – 8815 Asheville Hwy
 - *Dutchtown Convenience Center* – 10618 Dutchtown Road
 - *Halls Convenience Center* – 3608 Neal Drive
 - *John Sevier Convenience Center* – 1950 W. Governor John Sevier Hwy
 - *Karns Convenience Center* – 6930 Karns Crossing Lane
 - *Powell Convenience Center* – 7311 Morton View Lane
 - *Tazewell Pike / Gibbs Convenience Center* – 7201 Tazewell Pike