

Kitchen Safety

COOKING TEMPERATURES

Cooking food to a high enough temperature is important because it kills harmful bacteria and other pathogens that can make you sick. The only sure way to tell if your food cooks to a high enough temperature is to use a food thermometer. You cannot tell when food is done by looking at it. Any cooked, uncured red meats—including pork—can be pink, even when the meat has reached a safe internal temperature.



The following chart has the safe minimum temperatures for meat, poultry, seafood and eggs. You can cook meat to higher temperatures according to your personal preference.

Temperature	Food	Rest Time
145 F	Beef, pork, veal and lamb steaks, roasts and chops	3 minutes (allows temperature to remain constant or continue to rise)
	Fresh ham (raw)	
	Precooked ham	None
	Fin fish	
160 F	Ground beef, pork, veal and lamb	None
	Egg dishes	
165 F	Ground turkey and chicken	None
	Chicken, turkey, duck and goose (whole and parts)	
	Stuffing (cooked alone or in bird)	
	Leftovers and casseroles	
Cook eggs until yolk and white are firm		None
Cook fin fish until flesh is opaque and separates easily with a fork		None
Cook shrimp, lobster, and crabs until flesh is pearly and opaque		None
Cook clams, oysters and mussels until shells open during cooking		None
Cook scallops until flesh is milky white or opaque and firm		None

HOW DO YOU USE A FOOD THERMOMETER?

Beef, Pork or Lamb Roasts, Steaks or Chops



Insert the thermometer in the middle of a roast. For steaks and chops, insert the thermometer in the thickest part, away from bone, fat or gristle. If the meat has an irregular shape, check the temperature in several places.

Thin Foods

If the meat (hamburger patty, pork chop, or chicken breast) is at least 2 to 3 inches in thickness, insert in the middle. For meat that is less than 2-3 inches, insert the thermometer from the side to the middle of the meat. Place meat on a plate or dish away from the heat, then insert the thermometer from the side.



Poultry

When cooking a whole chicken, turkey or other poultry, place the food thermometer in the thickest part of the thigh. Avoid touching the bone. For poultry parts, insert the thermometer into the thickest area avoiding the bone.



Combination Dishes

For casseroles and other combination dishes, place the thermometer into the thickest part of the food or the center of the dish. Egg dishes and dishes containing ground meat and poultry should be checked in several places.



Begin checking the temperature toward the end of cooking, before you expect it to be done.

Always wash the portion of the thermometer that comes in contact with food in soap and water.

What kind of thermometer do I need? Food thermometers come in many types and prices. Both digital and dial thermometers work well. If your budget is limited, a simple "instant read" thermometer with a dial works well for many foods. This type must be inserted 2 to 3 inches and does not remain in the food while it is cooking.

Safe Food for Tennessee. Keep Food Safe to Eat.

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