

# Correct cooking temperatures

21 March 2005

## What's so important about correct cooking temperatures?

Under-cooking meat and poultry can be very dangerous.

Raw meat and poultry can contain harmful bacteria, including *salmonella*, *listeria*, *campylobacter* and *E. coli* that can cause food poisoning.

Fortunately, these harmful microorganisms can be destroyed by making sure you properly cook meat and poultry.

## How can I tell my poultry and meat is properly cooked?

Different meats require different cooking temperatures to destroy harmful bacteria.

For example, a steak need only be seared on the outside and can be rare inside, while minced meat must be carefully cooked to destroy bacteria. That's because minced meat has far greater surface area than steak and therefore greater risk of bacterial contamination.

One way is to simply cook minced meat, sausages and poultry until well done, right through to the centre. No pink should be visible and juices should run clear.

Using this method should ensure your meat and poultry is free from harmful bacteria, although people's idea of what constitutes "pink" and "clear running juices" might differ from person to person, that's why it's not a bad idea to invest in a meat thermometer probe.

## Do I really need a meat thermometer?

A meat thermometer helps you make sure all potentially harmful bacteria have been destroyed through proper cooking.

A thermometer probe shows you the exact temperature inside the meat or poultry so you can be sure it's cooked all the way through.

## Aren't they expensive?

Not at all, good quality and accurate meat thermometers cost around \$10 and are available from most home wear stores.

## How do I use it?

Simply insert the probe portion of the thermometer into the cooked/cooking meat and note the temperature on the dial.

Different meats require different cooking temperatures to destroy bacteria, which is why a meat thermometer is such a handy addition to the kitchen. **It is important you do not put the probe into the oven with cooking meat unless the manufacturer states this is acceptable.**

## Where to place the meat thermometer:

- Poultry - Insert the meat thermometer into the inner thigh area near the breast of the chicken or turkey, but not touching bone
- Ground meat & Poultry - The thermometer should also be placed in the thickest area of ground meat or poultry dishes like meatloaf.
- Beef, Pork, Lamb, Veal, Ham - Roasts, Steaks or Chops – Insert the thermometer into the centre of the thickest part, away from bone, fat and gristle
- Casseroles and Egg Dishes - The thermometer should be inserted into the thickest portion.

## Correct temperatures for "cooked" meats

Meat type	Correct "cooked" temperature
Fish	65°C
Minced meat, sausages	71°C
Beef, veal, lamb medium rare:	63°C
medium:	71°C
well done:	77°C
Fresh pork medium:	71°C
well done:	77°C
Ham fresh (raw):	71°C
pre-cooked (to reheat):	60°C
Chicken breasts:	77°C
Chicken & turkey (whole), thighs, wings legs:	82°C

