

# Cooking Food Safely is a Matter of Degrees

Each year, 1 out of every 4 people gets sick from harmful bacteria (germs) in food. Cooking foods to a safe internal temperature can lower your chance of getting sick. You cannot tell if a food is “done” just by the way it looks. The only way to tell that food is cooked properly is by checking the temperature with a food thermometer.

**How To Use a Food Thermometer** Use an instant-read food thermometer to check the internal temperature near the end of cooking time, but before the food is expected to be “done.” Always follow the instructions that come with your food thermometer.

Place the thermometer in the thickest part of the food. Do not let it touch bone, fat, or gristle.



Compare your thermometer reading to the recommended minimum temperatures to see if your food has reached a safe temperature.

If the food has not reached a minimum temperature, keep cooking for a while longer and check the temperature again. Always clean the thermometer with hot, soapy water **before and after each use.**

## USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures

Steaks & Roasts - 145 °F  
Fish - 145 °F  
Pork - 160 °F  
Ground Beef - 160 °F  
Egg Dishes - 160 °F  
Chicken Breasts - 165 °F  
Whole Poultry - 165 °F  
Leftovers - 165 °F  
Stuffing - 165 °F  
Hotdogs - 165 °F

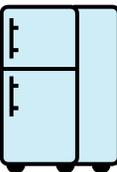


## Other ways to reduce foodborne illness:

**CLEAN:** Wash hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Wash cutting boards, dishes, and utensils with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item. Wash raw fruits and vegetables with cold water before using. You do not need to wash or rinse meat or poultry.



**SEPARATE:** Don't cross-contaminate. Separate raw, cooked, and ready-to-eat foods when shopping, preparing food, or storing. Never place cooked food on a plate which previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood.



**CHILL:** Refrigerate or freeze perishable and prepared foods, and leftovers within 2 hours or sooner.

**Source:** Adapted from “*Is it Done Yet?*” by the USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service