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Community Dining
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Safe Cooking Temperatures

Using color or texture to determine if food is cooked enough to safely eat is unreliable. The best, and only way to determine if food is cooked thoroughly enough to eat is to use a food thermometer.

The chart below describes safe cooking temperatures for meats, seafood, eggs and leftovers:

Product	Minimum Internal Temperature & Rest Time
Beef, Pork, Veal & Lamb Steaks, chops, roasts	145 °F (62.8 °C) and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
Ground Meats	160 °F (71.1 °C)
Ground Poultry	165 °F
Ham, fresh or smoked (uncooked)	145 °F (62.8 °C) and allow to rest for at least 3 minutes
Fully Cooked Ham (to reheat)	Reheat cooked hams packaged in USDA-inspected plants to 140 °F (60 °C) and all others to 165 °F (73.9 °C).
All Poultry (breasts, whole bird, legs, thighs, wings, ground poultry, giblets, and stuffing)	165 °F (73.9 °C)
Eggs	160 °F (71.1 °C)
Fish & Shellfish	145 °F (62.8 °C)
Leftovers	165 °F (73.9 °C)
Casseroles	165 °F (73.9 °C)

- All leftovers, whether they contain meat/seafood/eggs or not, should be reheated to a minimum of 165 degrees F.
- When taking temperatures, make sure the thermometer is inserted into the middle, thickest area of the food. The outside of the food will always be warmer than the inside, so temping the middle will ensure the whole dish has reached a safe temperature.
- Make sure when taking the temperature of your food that the thermometer is not touching the surface of the

pan or cooking dish. The surface you are cooking on is much hotter and could give you an inaccurate temperature.

- When cooking eggs, it may be difficult to get a proper temperature with a thermometer. It would be acceptable to cook eggs until the egg white and yolk are both firm and not runny.
- You may prefer your eggs “sunny side up”, or “over easy”... just know that consuming under cooked eggs increases your risk of food borne illness.
- Everyone has a preference on how they liked their steak prepared. Cooking your filet or strip steak to an internal temp of 145 degrees F equates to “medium” preparation. So cooking or ordering a steak “rare” or “medium-rare” would increase your risk of foodborne illness.
- When reheating a piece animal protein (such as poultry, beef, pork, fish etc...) they should be treated as leftovers and safely reheated to 165 degrees F.
- When storing raw cuts of meat in the refrigerator, they should be stored according to safe cooking temps. That would mean keeping raw meats with the highest safe cooking temp on the bottom. Raw meats or eggs should never be stored above produce or leftovers, as this increases the risk of cross contamination.

It is also important to cool food quickly after cooking as well. Prepared foods that need to be refrigerated should not sit out longer than 2 hours.

If you are large batch cooking (soups or casseroles), it is important to separate them into smaller containers to allow them to cool faster. If you were to put a large pot of soup into the refrigerator while warm, it could take several hours too cool, increasing the risk of foodborne illness.



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