

Guidance on safer cooked meat production: A 10-point plan

Introduction

This guidance has been produced to provide information on producing cooked meat safely. It is based on guidance issued by the Meat and Livestock Commission.

Preparation

1. Clean and disinfect the raw meat preparation area before starting. This area must be separate from any area in which cooked meat is handled. Alternatively, use a chopping board designated for raw meat preparation, or thoroughly clean the chopping board after use, and before using it for cooked meat or ready to eat food preparation.

A detergent solution should be used to clean surfaces and chopping boards before they are disinfected. It is important to use the correct disinfectant for surfaces and equipment which will not adversely affect the food, and to use it at the appropriate concentration. Sanitizers can be used to clean and disinfect surfaces and chopping boards. Again, it is important to use the correct concentration and to rinse thoroughly.

For guidance on the use of disinfectants see Point 10.

Hands must be washed thoroughly before and after handling the raw meat.

Cooking

2. To cook meat safely so that E coli 0157, Salmonella and Listeria are killed, the centre of the meat must reach a core temperature of at least 70°C for two minutes or an equivalent temperature/time combination, or until the juices run clear.

Equivalent Core Cooking Time/Temperature

Temperature	Time
60°C	45 minutes
65°C	10 minutes
70°C	2 minutes
75°C	30 seconds
80 °C	6 seconds

3. Make sure cooking equipment can achieve this consistently.
4. The cooking process must be monitored. End of cook core temperatures should be measured and recorded regularly, perhaps one item from every cook until those doing the cooking are confident that the time temperature combination being used is achieving the end cook temperature desired.
5. Probe thermometers are very useful for taking the temperature of products, whether hot or cold. However, care has to be taken to ensure that the probe does not contaminate the product being probed, especially if it is ready to eat and will not be heated to a temperature which will destroy bacteria. Probes should be kept clean and disinfected before use. If the probe is disinfected using anti bacterial wipes, these must be suitable for use with food.

Probe thermometers should be checked regularly for accuracy, perhaps every three to six months. They can be checked by placing the probe in boiling water, when the thermometer should read between 99°C and 101°C, and in a crushed ice and water mixture, when the temperature should read -1°C to +1°C. If the thermometer appears not to be working correctly it should be replaced. Further advice can usually be obtained from the manufacturer.

Cooling

6. The cooked product should be cooled as quickly as possible in order to prevent the growth of food poisoning bacteria, and then kept under refrigeration. Products should be cooled down from 60°C to room temperature within ninety minutes to two hours and then placed in the refrigerator. Remember the larger the joint, the slower it will cool, so restrict joint size to 2kg or 6lbs, or divide larger items like large turkeys into smaller parts after cooking.

Handling after cooking

7. Clean and disinfect the cooked product handling area, which must be separate from any area in which raw products are handled, or use specially designated chopping boards, as mentioned in (1) above. All equipment must be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected before and after use on cooked foods.
8. Always wash hands thoroughly before handling cooked products.
9. Never allow raw foods or any other products, used utensils or tools, or surfaces likely to cause contamination, to come into contact with cooked foods.

Remember: food poisoning from cooked foods often occurs as a result of cross-contamination from raw foods.



Help available

10. The Food, Health and Safety Team and trade associations will be only too pleased to help and offer advice on the safe handling of foods and on disinfectants.

For further information

- Contact: Food, Health and Safety Team, Eden District Council, Mansion House, Penrith CA11 7YG
- Telephone: 01768 212491
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- Website: www.eden.gov.uk