



**Color is Not a Reliable Indicator of Safety**



**Check with a Food Thermometer**



**Microwave to Safe Temperatures**

## Cook to Safe Temperatures



**Safely cooking food is a matter of temperature.** Foods need to reach a high enough internal temperature to kill bacteria that can cause foodborne illness.

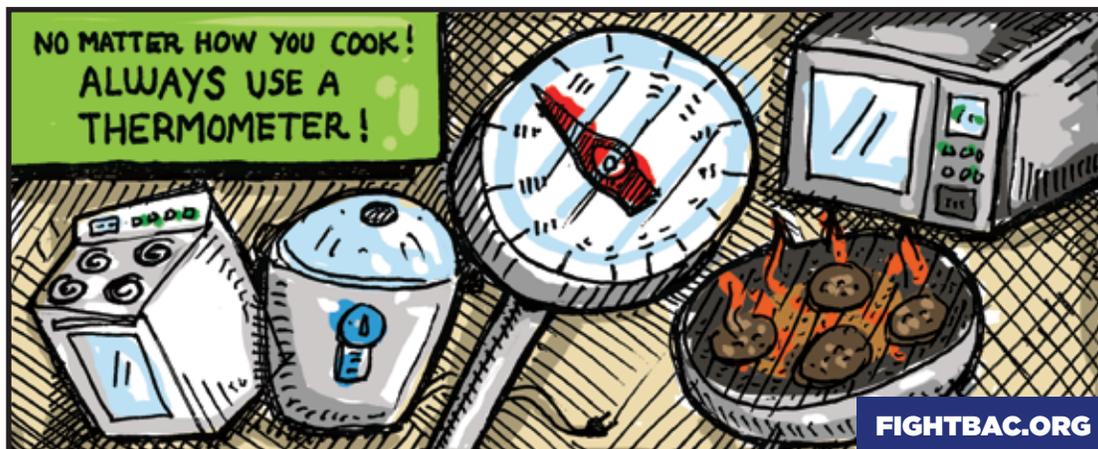


### Color is Not a Reliable Indicator of Safety

- Color and texture are not reliable indicators of whether food has reached a high enough internal temperature to destroy pathogens.
- According to USDA research, **1 in 4 hamburgers turns brown before reaching a safe internal temperature.**
- The best way to ensure safety is to use a food thermometer.

### Check with a Food Thermometer

- **Use a food thermometer** to ensure that meat, poultry, seafood, egg products, leftovers and casseroles are cooked to safe temperatures to destroy any harmful bacteria.
- Compare your thermometer reading to the chart to make sure food has been cooked to a safe temperature.
- Food thermometers should be placed in the **thickest part of food**, making sure not to touch bone, fat or gristle.
- **Clean your food thermometer** with hot water and soap after each use.
- For information about calibrating your food thermometers, check out the **Thermometers and Food Safety Web page** from the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service.



## Microwave to Safe Temperatures

### Read and follow package cooking instructions.

- Most prepared convenience foods are not ready to eat right out of the container.

### Know when to use a microwave or conventional oven.

- Sometimes proper cooking requires the use of a conventional oven, not a microwave.
- Some convenience foods may be shaped irregularly or are thicker in some areas and may not cook evenly in a microwave oven. It is important to use the appliance and the method recommended on the label.

### Know your microwave wattage before microwaving food.

- If your microwave's wattage is lower than the wattage mentioned in the label's instructions, it will take longer than the instructions say to cook the food to a safe internal temperature.

### Always use a food thermometer to ensure a safe internal temperature.

- Use a food thermometer to test food in several places to make sure it has reached a safe internal temperature.
- For more information on microwaving foods to safe temperatures, check out the **Cook it Safe! fact sheet** at [fightbac.org](http://fightbac.org).

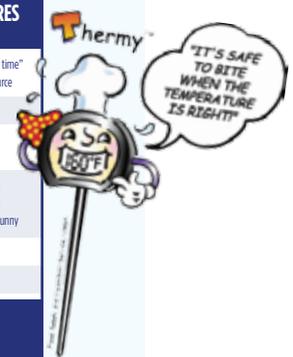


SAFE MINIMUM INTERNAL TEMPERATURES	
as measured with a food thermometer	
Beef, pork, veal and lamb (roast, steaks and chops)	145°F with a three-minute "rest time" after removal from the heat source
Ground meats	160°F
Poultry (whole, parts or ground)	165°F
Eggs and egg dishes	160°F, but cook eggs until both the yolk and the white are firm; scrambled eggs should not be runny
Leftovers	165°F
Finfish	145°F

GUIDELINES FOR SEAFOOD	
Shrimp, lobster, crabs	Flesh pearly and opaque
Clams, oysters and mussels	Shells open during cooking
Scallops	Milky white, opaque and firm

Download and print this chart here.



### Important Cooking Tips to Remember: Entertaining and On-the-Go Foods

- When entertaining and serving hot food buffet-style, use a chafing dish, warming tray or slow-cooker to keep food hot.
- When bringing hot foods to a party or traveling with hot foods, transport them in insulated thermal containers. Keep containers closed until serving time.

### THE FOUR WAYS TO FIGHT BAC!

CLEAN



SEPARATE



COOK



CHILL

