



# FOOD SAFETY UPDATE

## *It's Safe to Bite, When the Temperature is Right*

**Placer County  
Cooperative Extension Office**  
11477 E Avenue  
DeWitt Center  
Auburn, CA 95603  
(530) 889-7350

**Nevada County  
Cooperative Extension Office**  
255 So. Auburn Street  
Veteran's Memorial Hall  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
(530) 273-4563

**Web site:**  
<http://ceplacernevada.ucdavis.edu>

**For more information,  
contact:**  
Rosemary Carter  
FSNEP Program Representative  
(530) 889-7350

**E-mail:**  
[carter@ucdavis.edu](mailto:carter@ucdavis.edu)

**Source:**  
FSIS Web site:  
<http://www.fsis.usda.gov>

Food thermometers aren't just for your holiday turkey; they are for all cuts and sizes of meat and poultry, including hamburgers, chicken breasts, and pork chops. Using a food thermometer when cooking meat, poultry, and even egg dishes is the only reliable way to make sure you're food is safe.

One of the critical factors in controlling pathogens in food is controlling temperature. Disease causing microorganisms such as bacteria grow very slowly at low temperature, multiply rapidly in midrange temperatures, and are killed at high temperatures.

### Is It Done Yet?...How to Read a Food Thermometer

1. Use an instant-read food thermometer to check the internal temperature toward the end of the cooking time, but before the food is expected to be "done."
2. The food thermometer should be placed in the thickest part of the food and should not be touching bone, fat, or gristle.
3. For casseroles and other combination dishes, place the food thermometer into the thickest portion of the food or the center of the dish. Egg dishes and dishes containing ground meat and poultry should be checked in several places.
4. Compare your thermometer reading to the USDA Recommended Internal Temperatures to determine if your food has reached a safe temperature.
5. Make sure to clean your food thermometer with hot, soapy water before and after each use!



Because there are so many types of food thermometers, it is important to follow the instructions for your food

The University of California prohibits discrimination against or harassment of any person employed by or seeking employment with the University on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, physical or mental disability, medical condition (cancer-related or genetic characteristic), ancestry, marital status, age, sexual orientation, citizenship, or status as a covered veteran (covered veterans are special disabled veterans, recently separated veterans, Vietnam-era veterans or any other veterans who served on active duty during a war or in a campaign or expedition for which a campaign badge has been authorized) in any of its programs or activities or with respect to any of its employment policies, practices, or procedures.

University Policy is intended to be consistent with the provisions of applicable State and Federal laws. Inquiries regarding the University's nondiscrimination policies may be directed to the Affirmative Action/Staff Personnel Services Director, University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, 1111 Franklin, 6th Floor, Oakland, CA 94607-5200; (510) 987-0096

University of California,  
United States Department of Agriculture,  
Placer and Nevada Counties Cooperating

## Seeing Isn't Believing

Looking at the color and texture of food is not enough to determine whether a food is done. You have to use a food thermometer to be sure. According to USDA research, 1 out of every 4 hamburgers turns brown before it reaches a safe internal temperature. The only safe way to know if meat, poultry, and egg dishes are done is to use a food thermometer.



### USDA Recommended Internal Temperatures:

- Steaks, roasts, fish—145°
- Pork, ground beef, egg dishes—160°
- Chicken breasts—170°
- Whole chicken—180°

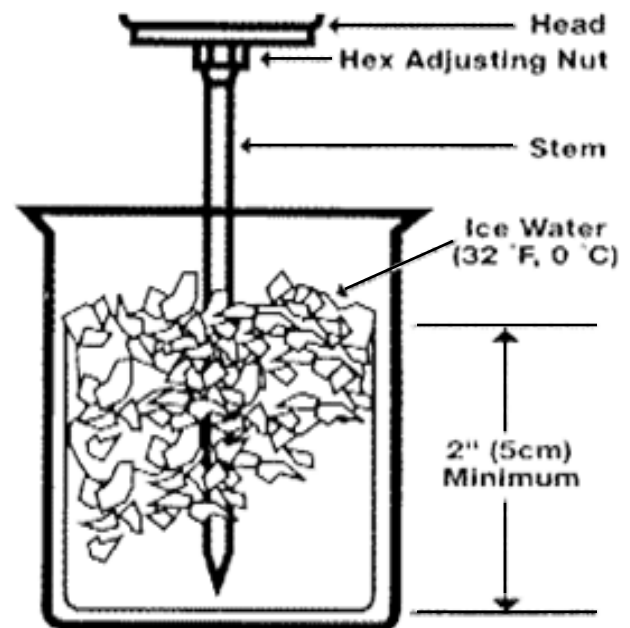
## Calibrating a Thermometer

When you use a food thermometer, you need to make sure the temperature it gives you is accurate. An easy way to do this is to use ice and water.

Pack a large cup to the top with crushed ice. Put the thermometer at least 2 inches into the water. After 30 seconds, read the dial. It should read 32°F (0°C).

If it does not read 32°F (0°C) after you have waited at least 30 seconds, you should:

1. Leave it in the ice water.
2. Use pliers or a wrench and turn the nut on the back of the thermometer until the needle reads 32°F (0°C).
3. Wait 30 seconds. Keep repeating these steps until the thermometer reads 32°F (0°C). Add ice as it melts.



Calibrate your food thermometer whenever it is bumped or dropped. This way you will know that it is telling you the correct temperature.