Some Facts about
Safe Food Temperatures for Summer Safety

From the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency
(Is it *done* yet?" You can't tell by *looking*. Use a food thermometer to be sure)

Did You Know? It is estimated that every year about 76 million people in the United States become ill from harmful bacteria in food; of these, about 5,000 die.

Thermometers Aren't Just for Turkey Anymore
These days, food thermometers aren't just for your holiday roasts—they're 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 are preparing a safe and delicious meal for your family, including on the grill!

Why Use a Food Thermometer?
Everyone is at risk for foodborne illness. One effective way to prevent illness is to use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of meat, poultry, and egg dishes. Using a food thermometer not only keeps your family safe from harmful food bacteria, but it also helps you to **avoid overcooking,** giving you a safe and flavorful meal. (if you cannot tell the difference between the charcoal and the hamburger – it's too well done!)

Some people may be at high risk for developing foodborne illness. These include pregnant women and their unborn babies and newborns, young children, older adults, people with weakened immune systems, and individuals with certain chronic illnesses. These people should pay **extra** attention to handle food safely.

What Are the Signs of Foodborne Illness?
The signs and symptoms of foodborne illness range from upset stomach, diarrhea, fever, vomiting, abdominal cramps, and dehydration, to more severe illness—even death.

"Is It Done Yet?"
How to Use 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. Compare your thermometer reading to the USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures to determine if your food has reached a safe temperature (see below).

4. 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 thermometer.

USDA Recommended Safe Minimum Internal Temperatures for Cooking at Home

- Steaks & Roasts - 145 °F (160 = Medium)
- Fish - 145 °F
- Pork chops - 160 °F
- Ground Beef - 160 °F
- Egg Dishes - 160 °F
- Chicken Breasts - 165 °F
- Whole Poultry - 165 °F
- Leftovers- Reheating 165° F

Seeing Isn't Believing
Many people assume that if a hamburger is brown in the middle, it is done. However, looking at the color and texture of food is not enough—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. When a hamburger is cooked to **160 °F**, it is both safe and delicious!

Be Food Safe! Prepare With Care
Know how to prepare, handle, and store food safely to keep you and your family safe. Bacteria can grow on meat, poultry, seafood, eggs, and dairy products, as well as cut-up or cooked vegetables and fruits.

CLEAN: Wash hands and surfaces often
Wash your hands with warm, soapy water for 20 seconds before and after handling food. Wash your cutting boards, dishes, etc., with hot, soapy water after preparing each food item. Wash fruits and vegetables with cold water before using. There is no need to wash or rinse meat or poultry.

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

COOK: Cook food to proper temperatures
Use a food thermometer to be sure!

CHILL: Refrigerate Promptly
Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within 2 hours or sooner.

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) TTY: 1-800-256-7072
on the web at: www.IsItDoneYet.gov

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