

# Giving Recipes a Food Safety Update

## Lancaster County

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How many of the following questions would you answer “YES”?

1. Are you unsure of the source and accuracy of the food safety information given in a recipe?
2. Do you have favorite recipes that have been passed down through your family?
3. Are you thinking of giving someone a cookbook as a present? How about as a prize at a health fair, class, etc.?
4. Are you using food preparation techniques you saw others use as you grew up?
5. Do you develop recipes?
6. Do you include recipes from others in personal columns, news stories, etc.?
7. Do you teach others how to cook?
8. Are you compiling a cookbook for your family or organization?



We wouldn't use the instruction book that came with the original Model T car for the most recent auto we purchased. Why is it different with food? Unknowingly, we may use or give others outdated recipe directions inconsistent with what we now know about food safety. Or we may assume people know the latest food safety guidelines. We may think everyone understands, for example, when we share a recipe that says “cook until done.”

New bacteria have emerged and others have gotten stronger since some of our favorite recipes were developed. For example, in 1990 the U.S. Public Health Service cited: *E. coli O157:H7*, *Salmonella*, *Listeria monocytogenes* and *Campylobacter jejuni* as the four most serious food-borne pathogens in the United States. Twenty years ago, three of these — *Campylobacter*, *Listeria* and *E. coli O157:H7* — weren't even recognized as sources of foodborne disease!

Here are four general checkpoints for evaluating recipes for food safety that come in part from U.S. Dept. of Agriculture (USDA) recommendations.

### Checkpoint 1: Oven Temperatures

Use a minimum oven temperature of 325 F for cooking meat, poultry and casseroles containing them. Lower temperatures may not heat the food fast enough to prevent bacterial growth.

## Checkpoint 2: Eggs

One hundred years ago, an 1898 “Receipt Book” by B. J. Kendall, M.D., offered a “recipe for egg water to cure vomiting.” Today we'd no longer consider giving a sick family member a glass of egg white mixed with water. However, without thinking, we may still follow the unsafe practices of:

- Licking the cake batter from the bowl;
- Tasting raw cookie dough;
- Making ice cream with raw eggs.



Consider the following when cooking with eggs:

- Cook eggs — whether scrambled, fried, poached, soft-cooked, made into an omelet, etc. — until the yolk and white are firm, not runny.
- Avoid recipes in which eggs remain raw or are only partially cooked. Examples could include Caesar's salad dressing; mousses; chiffons; homemade ice cream, mayonnaise or hollandaise sauce.
- Heat cooked egg bases for recipes, such as custard (baked and stirred) and quiche to an internal temperature of 160 F. At this temperature, a knife inserted near the center of a quiche or custard comes out clean. For stirred custard, the mixture will coat a metal spoon.
- Egnogs and homemade ice creams can be safely made using a stirred custard base. Chill the cooked custard base thoroughly before freezing for ice cream to assure it rapidly reaches a safe temperature. Chill cooked custard in a shallow pan on the top shelf of the refrigerator; limit depth to 2 inches. Loosely cover to allow heat to escape and to protect from accidental contamination during cooling. Stir occasionally to help it cool; use a clean spoon each time. Cover tightly when cooled.

## Checkpoint 3: Meat, Poultry

Judging meat “doneness” by whether it's “brown inside” isn't always a reliable indicator of a safe internal temperature. One out of every four hamburgers turns brown in the middle BEFORE it has reached a safe internal temperature, according to recent USDA research.

Also, as a part of safe preparation, do not partially cook or brown foods to cook later. Any bacteria present won't be destroyed. If you're cooking food partially in the microwave, oven or stove to reduce grilling time, pre-cook it IMMEDIATELY before grilling. Use these recommended internal temperature for doneness:

## **Recommended Temperatures**

### **Ground meat and poultry (prepared as patties, meatloaf, etc.)**

Beef, veal, lamb, pork: 160 F

Chicken, turkey: 165 F

*NOTE: Thoroughly cook ground meat or poultry BEFORE combining it with other ingredients in casseroles, meat sauces, etc.*

### **Fresh beef, veal and lamb:**

Roasts and steaks:

*Medium rare:* 145 F

*Medium:* 160 F

*Well-done:* 170 F

### **Fresh pork:**

Chops, roasts, ribs:

*Medium:* 160 F

*Well-done:* 170 F

### **Ham:**

Fresh (raw): 160 F

Cured, fully cooked, (to reheat): 140 F

### **Poultry:**

Whole chicken, turkey: 165 F

Poultry breasts, roasts: 165 F

Poultry thighs, wings: 165 F

Stuffing (cooked separately or in the bird): 165 F

*NOTE: These temperatures are recommended for consumer cooking. They are not intended for processing, institutional or food service preparation.*

The ONLY way to know food has been cooked to a safe internal temperature is to use a food thermometer. A thermometer also helps you avoid overcooking a food and lowering its taste and quality. For more information on how to choose and use a food thermometer, read the information on thermometers from the USDA Thermo™ Campaign on the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service Web site at [www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact\\_Sheets/Use\\_a\\_Food\\_Thermometer/index.asp](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/Fact_Sheets/Use_a_Food_Thermometer/index.asp)

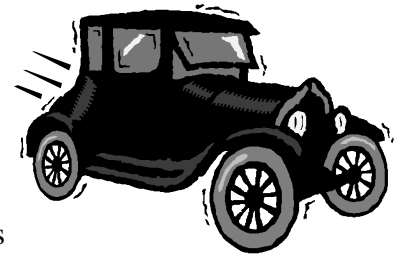
## Checkpoint 4: Marinades

Marinades help flavor meat and poultry. *They DO NOT kill bacteria.* Here are some general guidelines for safely using marinades:

- Marinate in a covered container in the refrigerator, not on the counter. A glass container is a safe choice for marinating. Acidic ingredients in some marinades such as wine, vinegar and lemon juice could react with certain metallic or glazed ceramic containers and leach into the food being marinated.
- Marinating time in the refrigerator shouldn't exceed the recommended storage time for that type and cut of fresh meat or poultry. If you're not certain how long to marinate a particular food — for best safety AND quality — limit time to 24 hours or less.
- If some of the marinade is to be used for basting during cooking or as a sauce on the cooked food, reserve a portion of the marinade and store in the refrigerator until ready to use. Do not put raw meat or poultry in it.
- When basting, don't recontaminate fully cooked meat or poultry by adding sauce with a brush that has been used on raw or undercooked foods.
- For greatest safety, don't re-use leftover marinade that has been in contact with raw meat or poultry.

## Model T or Latest Model?

Henry Ford, the person behind the Model T car, is quoted as saying, *“Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.”*



It might also be said that anyone who keeps learning about food safety stays healthy! The next time you make or give others a recipe, check to see if you should do a food safety update.