

# Safe Cooking Temperatures

This playbook outlines the necessary steps to understand and apply proper cooking temperatures for various types of food to ensure food safety. It also addresses the concept of the 'danger zone,' a temperature range where foodborne bacteria can multiply rapidly.

## Step 1: **Understand Danger Zone**

Understand that the 'danger zone' for bacterial growth in food is between 40°F (4°C) and 140°F (60°C). Food should not be left out at these temperatures for more than 2 hours.

## Step 2: **Raw Meat/Poultry**

Ensure that raw meat and poultry are cooked to at least 165°F (74°C) to kill harmful bacteria and ensure food safety.

## Step 3: **Ground Meats**

Cook all ground meats to a minimum internal temperature of 160°F (71°C) to ensure all bacteria are destroyed.

## Step 4: **Fresh Pork/Beef**

Cook fresh cuts of pork and beef to at least 145°F (63°C) and allow the meat to rest for at least 3 minutes before carving or consuming.

## Step 5: **Fish**

Ensure that fish reaches an internal temperature of 145°F (63°C) during cooking to ensure it's safe to eat.

## Step 6: **Eggs/Dishes**

Cook eggs and any dishes containing eggs to 160°F (71°C), until they're firm and no longer runny, to prevent salmonella infection.

## Step 7: **Leftovers**

Reheat all leftovers to at least 165°F (74°C) before consuming to ensure that any potential bacterial growth is eliminated.

## Step 8: **Refrigerate Promptly**

Store perishable foods at 40°F (4°C) or below within 2 hours after cooking or purchasing. Refrigerate cooked leftovers within 2 hours of cooking.

# **General Notes**

## **Thermometer**

Always use a properly calibrated food thermometer to check the internal temperature of meats, poultry, and egg dishes to ensure they have reached safe temperatures.

## **Cross-contamination**

Be mindful of cross-contamination risks by keeping raw and cooked foods separate. Wash hands, utensils, and surfaces after touching raw meats.

## Defrosting Safely

Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, cold water, or the microwave to prevent the food from entering the danger zone as it defrosts.

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