

Know Your Temps—Use a Thermometer

Why Use A Food Thermometer?



Many people think they can tell when food is cooked by touch or by sight. But:

- **1 out of every 4 hamburgers turns brown in the middle before it has reached a safe internal temperature**, according to USDA research.
- Touch-temped meats can be more or less done than you think. A steak cooked to temperature will be perfect every time.



It's also important to **make sure cold food stays cold**. If food requiring Time and Temperature Control for Safety (TCS Foods) are held above 41° F, harmful bacteria may grow. Checking food temperatures after a power outage can help you decide what foods are safe to keep.

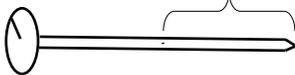
Which Thermometer is Right for You?

Thermometers come in many shapes and sizes. Make sure yours is right for you.

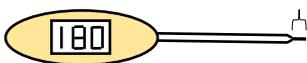
- **Temperature Range:** Look for a range of at least 0° F -220° F.
- **Thermometer type:** Both digital and analog (dial-type) thermometers work well.
 - **Analog thermometers** cost less, but need to be [calibrated](#) in ice water regularly and adjusted to make sure they give accurate readings. They also need to go deeper into food to take an accurate temperature.
 - **Digital thermometers** need to be checked in ice water regularly to make sure they are accurate, but usually do not need adjustments. They can take accurate temperatures in thinner cuts of food.



Temperature Reading Zone



Temperature Reading Zone



Why Are Thermometers Important?

- Someone can become sick anytime from 20 minutes to 6 weeks after eating food with some types of harmful bacteria.
- Young children, pregnant women, people over 65, and people with chronic illnesses are at an increased risk for food borne illness.
- An estimated 48 million people get sick from food borne illnesses each year. Approximately 128,000 of these people are hospitalized; roughly 5,000 die.
- Food needs to be cooked to or stored at a safe temperature.
- **Using a food thermometer is the only way to know if food has reached a safe temperature.**



For more information, please contact:

ACHD Food Safety Program • 412.578.8044 • foodsafety@alleghenycounty.us
2121 Noblestown Rd., Ste 210 • Pittsburgh, PA. 15205 • www.achd.net/food

Bacterial Growth Danger Zone

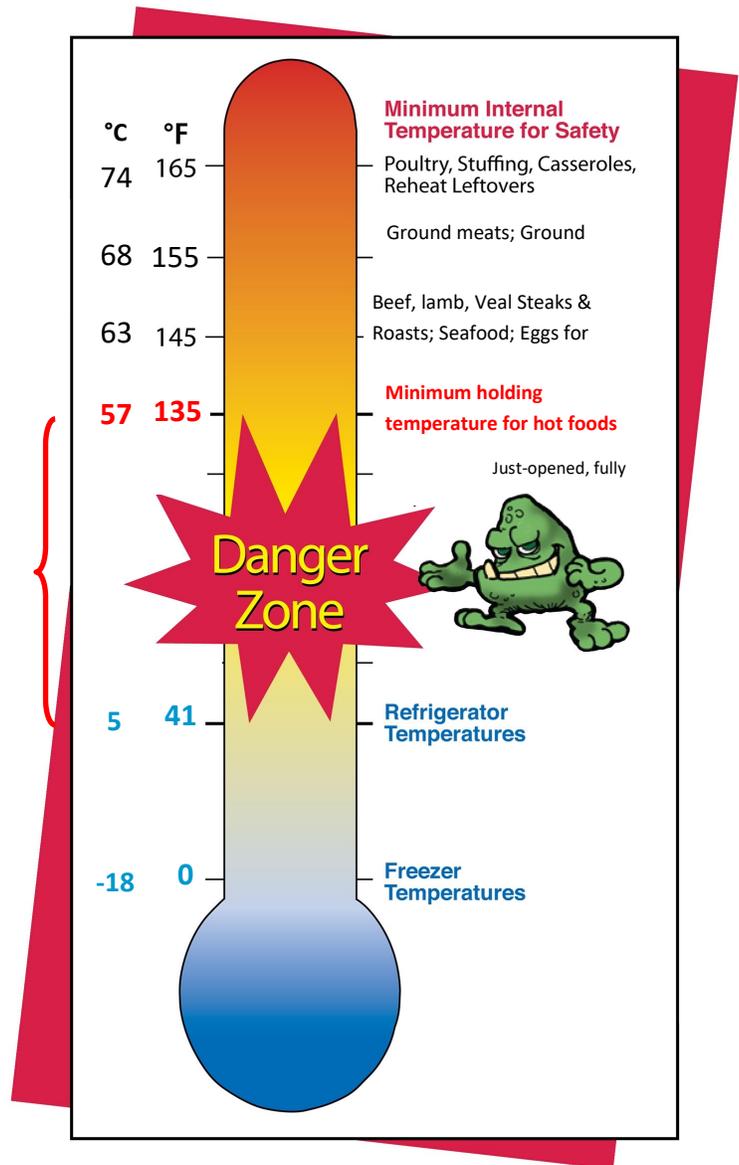
Keep hot food hot! It must be held above 135° F (57° C) to slow bacterial growth and keep food safe.

If you cook food to less than the minimum safe temperatures, there may be an increased risk of foodborne illness.

The Danger Zone for bacterial growth is from 41°-135° F (-18°-5° C).

Given the right conditions, bacteria may double every 15-20 minutes.

Keep cold food cold: it must be below 41° F (5° C) to slow bacterial growth and keep food safe.



Using a food thermometer is the only way to know if food has reached a safe temperature



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