

USDA REVISES RECOMMENDED COOKING TEMPERATURES FOR ALL WHOLE CUTS OF MEAT TO 145°F



(May 24, 2011) The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that it is updating its recommendations for safely cooking pork, beef steaks, roasts, and chops. **USDA now recommends cooking all whole cuts of meat to 145°F as measured with a food thermometer placed in the thickest part of the meat, then allowing the meat to rest for three minutes before carving or consuming.** The USDA is lowering the recommended safe cooking temperature for whole cuts of pork from 160°F to 145°F and adding a three-minute rest time. The safe temperature for cuts of beef, veal, and lamb remains unchanged at 145°F, but the USDA is adding a three-minute rest time as part of its cooking recommendations. A temperature of 145°F would be termed 'medium rare.'

This change does not apply to ground meats, including ground beef, veal, lamb, and pork, which should be cooked to 160°F and do not require a rest time. The safe cooking temperature for all poultry products, including ground chicken and turkey, remains at 165°F.

This also does not apply to cured pork products such as ham. Fresh or raw ham should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F; pre-cooked ham should be reheated to 140°F.

The new cooking recommendations clarify long-held perceptions about cooking pork. Historically, consumers have viewed the color pink in pork to be a sign of undercooked meat. If raw pork is cooked to 145°F and allowed to rest for three minutes, it may still be pink but is safe to eat. The pink color can be due to the cooking method, added ingredients, or other factors. As always, cured pork (e.g., cured ham and cured pork chops) will remain pink after cooking.

Many cuts of meat, but especially pork, have gotten leaner over time. As farmers have raised leaner animals, there is less fat in the muscle to baste the meat during cooking and the meat tends to dry out, especially if over-cooked. Cooking to a lower, but still safe, internal temperature will give consumers a safe, high quality product to enjoy.

The USDA reminds consumers that color or appearance is not a reliable indicator of safety or 'doneness' of meat. Only by using a food thermometer can consumers determine if meat has reached a safe internal temperature.

Safe Internal Temperatures	
Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures	
Ground beef, pork, veal, lamb	160°F
Ground turkey, chicken	165°F
Whole Cuts	
Beef, Veal, Lamb, Pork	
• Medium rare (3 minute hold)	145°F
• Medium	160°F
• Well done	170°F
Poultry (all cuts)	165°F
Seafood	145°F
(or until flesh is opaque and flakes easily with a fork)	



Full press release: www.fsis.usda.gov/News_&_Events/NR_052411_01/index.asp

Government food safety information: www.befoodsafe.org/

Information on food thermometers & how to use them:

www.fsis.usda.gov/food_safety_education/thermometers_&_food_safety/index.asp

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