

**HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY - COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES
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GUIDELINES FOR FINAL COOKING TEMPERATURES OF POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS FOODS

INTRODUCTION

Potentially hazardous foods, both raw and ready-to-eat, may contain harmful microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, or parasites.

Adequate cooking will destroy these harmful microorganisms and is an important step in food borne illness prevention.

GUIDELINES FOR FINAL COOKING TEMPERATURES

The table below provides the minimum required internal temperature needed to destroy harmful microorganisms in food that is cooked by conventional methods (i.e., heat sources other than a microwave) and also microwave cooking.

FOOD PRODUCT	CONVENTIONAL COOKING TEMPERATURE °F	MICROWAVE COOKING TEMPERATURE °F
Poultry	165	190
Stuffed meats	165	190
Ground beef and ground pork	157	182
Pork, ham, sausage, bacon	155	180
All other potentially hazardous foods, including eggs, fish, beans, rice, whole meat and seafood	145	170

MICROWAVE COOKING

Microwave cooking requires additional steps to ensure food is evenly and thoroughly cooked. Follow these simple steps:

- Heat food 25°F higher than conventional cooking (refer to table above).
- Rotate and stir food during cooking.
- Cover the food product to retain surface moisture.
- Allow food product to stand covered for at least 2 minutes after cooking to obtain an even temperature.

ADDITIONAL SAFE FOOD HANDLING TIPS

Heat will not destroy:

- Some toxins produced by bacteria.
- Bacterial spores which can later produce harmful numbers of bacteria.

It is, therefore, important to maintain the food product:

- At 41°F or colder or
- At 140°F or hotter, and
- Protect from possible contamination by unclean hands, utensils, or overhead drippage.

For more information on food protection, please contact the Environmental Health Service (831) 454-2022.