

BEEF FAST FACTS

BEEF INFORMATION FOR MEAT RETAILERS AND THEIR CUSTOMERS

Keep Customers Safe and Healthy

If your customers have questions about how to safely handle and store beef, they're sure to turn to you. Your meat department should be their best resource when it comes to food safety. That's why this issue of *Beef Fast Facts* is dedicated to ensuring you have all the information to answer any questions your customers ask. Help reduce the risk of foodborne illness by educating your customers about how to safely store and prepare meat at home.

Be prepared to share the following food safety tips with your customers.

CLEAN: WASH HANDS AND SURFACES OFTEN

Washing with hot, soapy water helps prevent the spread of bacteria and other pathogens.

- Wash hands for 20 seconds before and after handling raw meat.
- Wash all utensils, cutting boards and counters that have touched raw foods.

SEPARATE: DON'T CROSS CONTAMINATE

Bacteria can spread through cross-contamination; never let raw meat touch ready-to-eat foods.

- Separate raw meat from other foods in the shopping cart and store raw meat in leak-proof containers or bags on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator.
- Use separate plates and utensils for raw food and cooked food.
- Wash cutting boards between uses with hot, soapy water, or use two cutting boards – one for raw meat and one for ready-to-eat foods.

COOK: COOK TO SAFE TEMPERATURE

Heating food kills bacteria.

- Cook meat to the correct internal temperature
- Use a meat thermometer to accurately measure internal temperature.
- Insert thermometer into the center of the thickest part of the meat, away from bone and fat.
- Stock these two common types of meat thermometers in your meat department:

- Instant read: gives a quick reading for meat at least one half inch thick, best for steaks and burgers
- Oven-proof: is inserted into meat prior to cooking and remains in oven, best for meat at least two inches thick, ideal for roasts
- Refer to the "Using a Meat Thermometer" customer handout in the "Additional Resources" section on reverse side.

CHILL: REFRIGERATE PROMPTLY

Cold temperatures slow the growth of bacteria.

- Set refrigerators no higher than 40°F and freezers at 0°F.
- Promptly refrigerate or freeze perishables within two hours of purchasing or preparing, or within one hour if the temperature is above 90°F.
- Never defrost food at room temperature; always thaw frozen beef in the refrigerator or defrost in the microwave.
- Always marinate food in the refrigerator.
- Store leftovers in shallow containers for refrigeration (two inches or less); the leftovers will cool faster, helping prevent growth of bacteria.

SOURCE: PARTNERSHIP FOR FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION AND WWW.FIGHTBAC.ORG



FIGHT BAC!

BAC!®, the national food safety campaign's mascot, makes learning about food safety easier and more memorable for kids and adults by giving the topic a personality.

SOURCE:
[HTTP://WWW.FIGHTBAC.ORG](http://WWW.FIGHTBAC.ORG)

SAFE COOKING TEMPERATURES

Ground Meat & Meat Mixtures

Beef & Veal 160° F



Fresh Beef & Veal

Medium Rare 145° F



Medium 160° F



Well Done 170° F



Leftovers & Casseroles

165° F



Soup, Stew & Chili

165° F



THE CULPRITS

The most common foodborne infections can ALL be prevented by proper handling and cooking. Stop these bacteria in their tracks by letting your customers know where they can expect to find them.

- *Listeria monocytogenes*, a foodborne bacterium that is commonly found in soil, water and the intestines of humans and animals.
- *Salmonella*, found in the intestines of animals and humans. It can spread to humans through cross-contaminated, raw or undercooked foods.
- *E. coli*, a group of bacterium normally found in the intestines of warm-blooded animals and humans. *E. coli* O157:H7 is a strain of *E. coli* that can cause illness in humans if they eat food or water contaminated with the bacteria.

SOLVE THE SAFETY CASE

According to recent research, consumers have improved safe handling practices at home, but the task of educating consumers about food safety never ends.

Findings show there is a gap between knowledge and behavior: consumers know what they should do, but they don't always do it! Top areas for improvement are: meat thermometer usage, (especially for small cuts of meat), proper defrosting and storage of meat.

Any time you're helping out a customer, try to slip in a food safety comment or two. Tell your customer purchasing steaks that meat thermometers are in Aisle 3 or remind someone purchasing a pot roast that it needs to be refrigerated or frozen within two hours of getting it home. These small comments will add up over time and may help save one of your customers from a preventable foodborne illness.

Visit the Web sites listed in the "Additional Resources" section to access customer friendly handouts and brochures to help encourage safe food handling practices in your customers' homes. Check out the new Bilingual Customer Handouts available for download at BeefRetail.org!

SOURCE: PARTNERSHIP FOR FOOD SAFETY EDUCATION

GROUND BEEF: THE SAFETY "411"

Because ground beef is popular year-round, it's important for retailers to know and share the safety scoop on this customer favorite. Ground beef must be cooked to a higher internal temperature than whole beef cuts because surface bacteria can be transferred to the interior of the meat during grinding. Remind customers to always cook ground beef to an internal temperature of 160°F (medium doneness). Visit SafeandSavory160.com for more information on the importance of properly cooking ground beef.



www.BeefRetail.org

ASK THE EXPERTS

Q: How can I assure my customers that the beef we sell is safe?

A: Every segment of the beef production chain has best practices in place to help prevent the bacteria that cause illnesses from food. The incidence of foodborne illnesses from beef is extremely low, and beef producers and suppliers are working together with the government to ensure the continued safety of U.S. beef.

Q: What should I do when I hear there's been a recall?

A: The USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service announces product recalls to alert the public when particular meat or poultry products could present a food safety concern for consumers. Visit www.FSIS.USDA.gov to find information concerning recalls of meat products, or www.FoodSafety.gov for other food products. If a customer has purchased a product that has been recalled, it can be returned to the store where purchased or thrown away.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Food Safety Section of BeefRetail.org Visit this Web site for all your beef safety resources.

www.BeefRetail.org/prodRetailFoodSafety.aspx

SafeandSavory160.com Learn the optimal internal temperature for ground beef and hints for keeping burgers at their best.

www.SafeandSavory160.com

NEW! – Bilingual Customer Handouts Two popular safety handouts, "Grill Talk" and "Using a Meat Thermometer", have been translated into Spanish! The English version and the Spanish version have been packaged together in one easy download.

www.BeefRetail.org/markCustomerHandouts.aspx

BeefSafety.org A consumer-focused Web site for beef safety information. Refer your customers here for more answers.

www.BeefSafety.org

BIFSCO.org Get the latest information on beef safety strategies and policies from the Beef Industry Food Safety Council (BIFSCO).

www.bifSCO.org/Information.aspx

FightBAC.org The Web site of the Partnership for Food Safety Education, creator of the Fight BAC!® campaign, provides free materials to educate consumers about food safety. www.fightbac.org/index.php

WIN WITH BEEF FAST FACTS!

The first 10 people to submit a correct answer to the following trivia question will win a "Beef. It's What's For Dinner." meat thermometer!

Q: How long should you wash your hands before and after handling raw meat?

Submit your answer here:
www.beefretail.org/BFFFoodSafetyPrize08.aspx

MAINTAIN RETAIL'S REPUTATION

90% of consumers trust that the meat, poultry and fish their supermarket sells is safe.

SOURCE: NPD

