

Cooking safely in your business

How to cook food in your business to kill harmful bacteria and prevent food poisoning.

Thorough cooking kills harmful bacteria in food. Undercooked food could cause food poisoning.

Cooking top tips

Make sure your business food is safe with our top tips:

- always follow cooking temperature guidelines according to the recipe or packet instructions
- check that food is cooked completely before serving - use visual cues, such as making sure the food is steaming hot
- consider using a food thermometer to verify the correct temperature
- practice good hygiene when preparing and cooking your food
- some frozen vegetables, such as sweetcorn, peas, and carrots, can contain bacteria - frozen vegetables need to be thoroughly cooked (follow packet instructions)

Cooking meat

Most types of meat should be thoroughly cooked as there could be harmful bacteria in the middle. You should thoroughly cook the following types of meat:

- poultry, for example chicken or turkey
- duck and other fowl including game birds
- pork
- rolled joints
- products made from minced meat, such as burgers, sausages and kebabs
- kidneys, liver, and other types of offal

Before you serve them, check that:

- they are steaming hot all the way through
- any juices run clear
- there's no pink or rare meat inside

With whole cuts of beef and lamb such as steaks, cutlets and roasting joints (not rolled joints), it is usually only the surface which can be contaminated with food poisoning bacteria. Make sure the meat surface is properly cooked and sealed to kill any bacteria, even if the middle of the meat is still pink.

You can find more information on [cooking safely in your business in our Safer food, better business for caterers pack](#).

Cooking liver pâté

You should:

- heat liver cores to 70°C for 2 minutes to make sure they are campylobacter free
- pre-freeze livers to reduce the risk of campylobacter

- safe cooking methods also include bain marie or sous vide

The following recipe offers a method for making chicken liver pâté that is campylobacter free:

PDF

[View A safe recipe for chicken liver pâté as PDF\(Open in a new window\)](#) (1.19 MB)

FSA Explains

Avian Influenza

Properly cooked poultry, game birds and other poultry products are safe to eat.

Avian Influenza (also known as bird flu) poses a very low food safety risk for the UK Catering industry and consumers and does not change our advice on the consumption of poultry products, including eggs and game birds.

[DEFRA has further advice on Avian Influenza.](#)

For [Northern Ireland specific advice on bird flu](#) please refer to the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Cooking temperatures

Standard advice is to cook food until it has reached a core temperature of 70°C for 2 minutes.

The other time and temperature combinations are:

- 60°C for 45 minutes
- 65°C for 10 minutes
- 70°C for 2 minutes
- 75°C for 30 seconds
- 80°C for 6 seconds

Cooking food at the right temperature and for the correct length of time will ensure that any harmful bacteria are killed.

You can [check the temperature of a food, using a clean probe](#). Insert the probe so that the tip is in the centre of the food or the thickest part.

Food safety coaching video – Cooking safely

Checking that foods are cooked thoroughly to kill harmful bacteria.

Keeping food hot

Hot food when held must be kept at 63°C or above. You can keep it below 63°C for up to two hours. If it has not been used within two hours, you should either:

- cool the food as quickly as possible to a temperature of 8°C or below
- throw it away

You can find more information on [hot holding in our Safer food, better business for caterers pack](#).

Reheating food

It is very important to reheat food properly to kill harmful bacteria that may have grown since the food was cooked.

Reheating means cooking again, not just warming up. Always reheat food until it is steaming hot all the way through. You can only reheat your food once.

You can find more information on [reheating food in our Safer food, better business for caterers pack](#).

Food safety coaching video – Reheating

Reheating food until it is steaming hot.

Remember: When you start a new food business or take over an existing business, you must [register with your local authority](#).