

# Food Safety Fact Sheet

## Using Food Thermometers

### INTRODUCTION

Thermometers are essential tools in any school nutrition program, and are necessary to implement a food safety program. School nutrition employees need to know how to use thermometers to check food temperatures.

### HERE ARE THE FACTS

Thermometers are designed for different uses and different temperature ranges. Food thermometers need to measure temperatures between 0 °F and 220 °F. Thermometers needed to check food temperatures include the following:

- Thermistor or thermocouple with a thin probe
- Bimetallic stemmed thermometer
- Oven-safe bimetallic thermometers
- Equipment thermometers



### APPLICATION

#### How to Use Thermometers

- Clean and sanitize thermometers before each use.
- Wash the stem of the thermometer, and sanitize by dipping stem into sanitizing solution or wiping with a sanitizing wipe. Allow to air dry.
- Store food thermometers in an area that is clean and where they are not subject to contamination.
- Check and change batteries in digital thermometers on a routine basis.





# Using Food Thermometers cont.

## How to Take Temperatures

Measure the internal temperature of food by inserting the stem of the thermometer into the thickest part of the food being sure to cover the sensor. Wait for the dial or digital indicator to stabilize at desired temperature for about 15 seconds. Take temperatures based on the type of food.

### Meats

- Roasts—insert thermometer in the middle of the roast avoiding any bones.
- Poultry—insert thermometer at the thickest part avoiding any bones.
- Casseroles—check temperature in the center and at several other points.
- Thin meats, such as hamburger patties—use a thermistor or probe that is tip sensitive to check temperatures.

### Milk

- Open a carton and insert thermometer at least 2 inches into the milk.

### Packaged foods

- Insert the thermometer between two packages without puncturing the packages.

## Recording Temperatures

When food temperatures are taken, they should be recorded on the production record or on a separate cooking and reheating log.

**Remember, follow state or local health department requirements.**

## References

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This project has been funded at least in part with Federal funds from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service through an agreement with Institute of Child Nutrition at The University of Mississippi. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. government.

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Suggested Reference Citation:  
Institute of Child Nutrition. (2016). *Using food thermometers*. University, MS: Author.

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