

Using a Food Thermometer



- Appliance type thermometers are to be left in the oven or refrigerator to tell if that appliance is working at the right temperature: refrigerator at 35 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit, freezer at 0 to 5 degrees Fahrenheit and the oven temperature should match the setting of the dial
- Instant-read or digital thermometers are to be put into the food to read the temperature of the food towards the end of cooking. **These thermometers are not to be left in the oven.**
- Make sure the thermometer is **calibrated** before using it the first time and frequently. To calibrate: fill a large glass with crushed ice. Add clean tap water to the top of the ice and stir well. Immerse the thermometer stem a minimum of two inches into the mixture, touching neither the sides nor the bottom of the glass. Wait a minimum of 30 seconds before adjusting. Without removing the stem from the ice, hold the adjusting nut (located just under the head of the thermometer) with a suitable tool like small pliers and turn the head slightly so the pointer reads 32 degrees F.
- When using an **instant-read thermometer**, check the stem of the thermometer for an indentation or "dimple" that shows how deep it must penetrate the meat to get an accurate reading. The temperature should register in about 15 seconds. Before checking the temperature of a food again, clean the thermometer stem with hot, soapy water.
- The reading will only be helpful if the thermometer is placed in the proper location in the product. In general, the thermometer should be placed in the thickest part of the food. Insert the stem about 2 inches into the thickest part of the food and away from bone, fat or gristle. For whole poultry, insert in the inner thigh. When the food being cooked is irregularly shaped, such as may be the case with a beef roast, check the temperature in several places. If a meat patty is not thick enough to check from the top, insert the thermometer in sideways.
- **Sample safe internal meat temperatures:** veal, lamb and pork (160 degrees F), ground poultry (165 degrees F), steaks and roasts that have been tenderized, boned, rolled, etc. (160 degrees F), whole steaks (160 degrees F), poultry (165 degrees F in the thigh). Cook fish for at least 5 minutes after all parts have reached 145 degrees F to look opaque and firm and flake easily with a fork.
- Most available food thermometers will give an accurate reading within 2 to 4 °F. The reading will only be correct, however, if the thermometer is calibrated correctly and placed in the proper location in the food. If not inserted correctly, or if the food thermometer is placed in the wrong area, the reading will not accurately reflect the internal temperature of the food. In general, the food thermometer should be placed in the thickest part of the food, away from bone, fat, or gristle.
- REMEMBER -- after each use wash the stem of the thermometer thoroughly in hot, soapy water.
- For more information: www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/thermy/kitchen.htm

For more information or to sign up for nutrition classes call:

Janelle L'Heureux MS RD: 213-201-1556 jlheureux@apla.org or go to www.apla.org and click on Calendar. APLA copyright © 2006. For persons with disabilities, reasonable accommodation may be provided upon request.

Please call 213-201-1582 TTY (for voice, call California Relay Service first at 711, then give operator the TTY number) at least 5 working days in advance to ensure availability. Thank you.