

What You Need To Know About Thermometers

Handout 3

Using a food thermometer is the **ONLY** sure way of knowing food is at a safe temperature. Different types of thermometers may be used to measure food temperature. Be sure to wash, rinse, sanitize and air dry thermometers before and after each use to prevent cross contamination.

Using a Food Thermometer

- Insert tip of stem into thickest part of the food.
- Hold for at least 15 seconds to read accurate temperature.
- Keep the stem from touching the sides or bottom of the pan.



Calibrating Thermometers

To make sure temperature readings are correct, thermometers must be checked (calibrated). Thermometers should be calibrated close to the temperature they'll be used to measure.

- **Ice Point Method**
Put thermometer stem into container of mostly crushed ice and some water. Don't let the stem touch the bottom or sides of the container. Wait 30 seconds, or until the needle stops moving, to read dial. The thermometer should read 32°F. If it does not, adjust the calibration nut with a small wrench until it reads 32°F.
- **Boiling Point Method**
Put the thermometer stem into a pan of boiling water so that the sensing area is completely submerged. Don't let the stem touch the bottom or sides of the pan. Wait 30 seconds or until the needle stops moving to read dial. The thermometer should read 212°F. If it does not, adjust the calibration nut with a small wrench until it reads 212°F. If the thermometer is not adjustable, replace it. Be careful that the hot water doesn't splash on you!

Remember, to keep foods safe to eat, don't let them stay in the temperature danger zone! (41°F to 140°F)

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