

Advisory Note 6

Safe Cooking of Burger and Minced Meat Products

Consumers

Follow the manufacturer's instructions when cooking burgers and similar minced meat products. It is particularly important to ensure that burgers and similar minced meat products are thoroughly cooked so that they are piping hot throughout. Eating undercooked burgers which are rare in the middle may be dangerous.

Barbecues

The cooking process is variable and difficult to control which means it is absolutely vital to ensure that burgers are thoroughly cooked so that they are piping hot throughout.

Manufacturers and Retailers

Minced Meat and minced meat product including burgers should be cooked to a minimum temperature of 70°C for two minutes or equivalent (see advisory note 5). Vendors of raw burgers should ensure that all burgers and similar minced meat products are supplied with adequate cooking instructions to comply with this recommendation. Cooking instructions should take into account factors such as whether the burger is frozen or chilled, the thickness and formulation of the burger, and the prescribed method of cooking.

The absence of pink meat in a burger after cooking is not in itself, a guarantee that the burger has been adequately cooked, but despite its limitations it may provide an additional safety check for consumers.

It is therefore recommended that the advice to cook burgers until the juices run clear and there are no pink bits inside may be used where appropriate (e.g. when a burger contains only beef and no added salt) but it should always be accompanied by other cooking instructions which achieve a minimum temperature of 70°C for two minutes or equivalent.

Wholesale Supplier to Caterers

Carton of burgers (and other similar minced meat products) supplied by wholesalers for caterers should be labelled with a clear instruction that the product must always be cooked thoroughly so that it is piping hot right through to the centre. Minced meat and minced meat products including burgers should be cooked to a minimum temperature of 70°C for two minutes or equivalent.

Caterers

Vendors of cooked burgers and other similar minced meat products, for example caterers, have a specific legal obligation to identify and control any process steps that are critical to food safety under the **(Food Hygiene (England) Regulations 2006 and [Article 4\(2\) of Regulation 852/2004](#))**. The thorough cooking of minced meat products, including burger to a temperature of 70°C for two minutes or equivalent, will be one such critical control. Caterers must ensure that their procedures achieved this and they should take into account the type of cooking equipment, its operating temperature, the temperature of the meat at the start of cooking, its thickness and any other relevant factors.

Caterers should consider the potential for undercooked burgers to cause disease and should not provide them to customers or, if specifically requested to do so, should remind the customer of the potential hazard.

Training

Verocytotoxin producing [Esherichia coli](#) (VTEC) infections could be significantly reduced if there was a better understanding of the need to avoid cross contamination and to cook food properly. It is recommended that commercial food handlers focus training on methods for the safe and hygienic handling of food. Catering establishments should ensure that the staff know precisely what to do (e.g. the routine for safe cooking) and why it must be followed. (see advisory note 3)

Cooking to a temperature of 70°C for two minutes or equivalent

In practical terms, it may be that an effective way of ensuring this will be to aim for a high core temperature of the product e.g. 75°C or 80°C and ensure this is met when monitoring.

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