

Preparing:

Wash hands thoroughly with warm soapy water before and after handling any raw meat. Thaw frozen meat in the refrigerator. If you must thaw food quickly, keep the food in its original wrapping and place in a container of cold water. Change the water every half hour to ensure the water remains cold. If raw meat comes in contact with sinks and kitchen surfaces, remember to wash them immediately.

You can also thaw meat in the microwave by using the "defrost" setting if the food is to be cooked immediately.

Marinate meat in the refrigerator, not on the counter. Discard the marinade after use because it contains raw juices, which may harbour bacteria. If you want to use the marinade as a dip or sauce, reserve a portion of it before adding it to the raw meat.

Do not allow cooked food to come in contact with raw meat. Use separate cutting boards and utensils or wash items thoroughly between uses.

Cooking:

Ground beef must be cooked to an internal temperature of 71° C (160° F). Using an instant-read food thermometer is crucial. In fact, research results indicate that some ground beef may prematurely brown before a safe internal temperature has been reached. The colour of meat alone is not considered a reliable indicator of ground beef safety. If eating out, order your hamburger cooked well done.

Serving:

Keep hot foods hot at 60° C (140° F) or higher and cold foods cold at 4° C (40° F) or lower. Do not keep cooked food unrefrigerated or unfrozen for more than two hours.