

When cooking any meat if you are not sure whether it's safe to serve it rare, always play it safe and cook thoroughly.

There is no need to wash raw chicken and meat—any bugs will be killed if you cook it thoroughly. However, if you do wash it you must be careful not to splash bugs on to the sink, worktop, dishes, food or anything else nearby and thoroughly disinfect the sink and surrounding area afterwards.

When is meat properly cooked?

Chicken portions—cut into the middle or the thickest part—where it should be piping hot and not pink.

Whole chicken—pierce the thickest part of the leg—between the drumstick and thigh—with a clean knife or skewer until the juices run out. They should not be pink or red. There should be no pink meat.

Burgers and sausages—cut into the middle where it should be piping hot and no longer pink.

Steaks—seal steaks on the outside, so that every surface is brown. They can be eaten rare or pink in the middle.

Reheating meats

It's very important to reheat food properly, whether it's a ready meal or leftovers. Always make sure the food is piping hot all the way through and only reheat food once.

Beat the barbecue bugs

Charred isn't well done

Even if meat is burnt on the outside, it might not be cooked properly on the inside. Cook food evenly over a steady heat and always check that it is cooked in the middle.

Use the oven

If you're barbecuing for lots of people, you could cook meats indoors and finish it off on the barbecue for added flavour. Make sure it's piping hot all the way through.

Keep food cool

Warm weather is perfect for bugs to grow. Try to keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible.



Craven District Council

1 Belle Vue Square

Broughton Road

Skipton

North Yorkshire

BD23 1FJ

01756 706258

environmentalhealth@cravenc.gov.uk

www.cravenc.gov.uk



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**Cooking
for the
Barbecue...
... do it safely**



Cooking safely on the barbecue is vital to steer clear of bouts of food poisoning. Bugs - such as *E.coli* 0157, *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* - can cause illness when food is incorrectly cooked or contaminated after cooking.

But there are simple steps to take to ensure safe eating:

- Wait until the charcoal is glowing red, with a powdery grey surface, before you start to cook
- Make sure frozen food is properly thawed before cooking
- Turn the food regularly, and move it around the barbecue, to cook it evenly.
- Check that the food is piping hot all the way through
- Make sure meat isn't pink in the centre—in poultry, pork, burgers, sausages and kebabs—and that juices run clear.

Keep raw meat separate

Raw meat can contain food poisoning bugs. If it touches food that has already been cooked or is ready to eat—salad and burger buns—the bugs can spread on to that food.

Follow these tips to prevent bugs spreading:

- Stop raw meat from touching or dripping on to other food
- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling raw meat
- Use separate utensils for raw and cooked meat
- Never put cooked food on a plate or surface that has been used for raw meat unless it has been washed thoroughly
- Don't put raw meat products on the barbecue next to cooked or partly cooked meat
- Don't add sauce or marinade to cooked food if it has already been used on raw

Why does raw meat contain bacteria?

Meat can become contaminated with bacteria during slaughter and processing. It is generally found on the outside of whole cuts of meat—steaks, cutlets and joints so if the outside is cooked they should be killed, even if the middle of the meat is pink. You can eat whole cuts of beef, lamb and venison when they are pink or rare. However whole cuts of pork should be thoroughly cooked and not served pink or rare.

Bacteria can be found all the way through minced products—burgers and sausages because of the way they are made. This means it is very important to cook them until juices run clear and there is no pink meat left.

Poultry and game—chicken, turkey, duck and goose—can also contain bacteria, so they should also be cooked until there's no pink meat left and any juices run clear. Ostrich also comes into this bracket as it's considered to be like poultry.

Meat that is minced, skewered or rolled should be cooked until its piping hot and none of it is still pink—regardless of the type of meat.



Each of these sausages is incorrectly cooked—they may look done on the outside but the inside may still be pink. To check meat is safe to eat make sure it is piping hot all the way through and none of it is pink.