

Grillmasters: Do you have the right tools?

Midland County Department of Public Health reminds Consumers to Use a Food Thermometer When Grilling



Midland – After a long winter, as Americans return to their barbecue grills, Midland County Department of Public Health (MCDPH) urge consumers to locate one tool critical for a safe and delicious cook-out – a food thermometer.

Consumers cannot determine if food is fully cooked just by looking at it. The *only* way to make sure food has reached a safe minimum internal temperature is to use a food thermometer. Harmful bacteria like *Salmonella* and *Escherichia coli* O157:H7 might be present in food that does not reach a safe internal temperature.

“Food thermometers are important from both a food safety and a quality standpoint,” said Bob Wolfe, Senior Environmental Health Sanitarian of MCDPH. “To ensure safety and prevent overcooking, use a food thermometer to check the internal temperature of meat and poultry toward the end of the cooking time.”

Two types of thermometers are best suited for home grilling: the digital instant-read thermometer and the thermometer-fork combination.

Both of these thermometers are easy to read and can be used in most foods, “Certified” food thermometers are accurate to within plus or minus 2 to 3 °F. The digital and fork type instant read thermometers are economical too, typically costing less \$15. Before using any food thermometer, it is important to read the manufacturer’s instructions for care and use.

Here are some additional tips from the MCDPH for using a food thermometer:

- These thermometers are not designed to remain in food while it is cooking.
- To test the temperature of meat and poultry, the food thermometer should be placed in the thickest part of the food and should not be touching bone, fat, or gristle. Check the temperature in several places to make sure the food is evenly heated.
- Refer to the Fight Bac safe Temperature Chart (<http://www.fightbac.org/safe-food-handling/cook/127-cook-heat-it-up-chart>) for safe minimum internal temperatures.
- Clean your food thermometer with hot water and soap before and after each use!

Grillmasters are also reminded that using a food thermometer is just one important part of protecting family and friends from foodborne illness. It is important to always follow the practices of Clean, Separate, Cook and Chill to reduce the risk of illness.