

Ask the Meat Scientist

Food Safety Tips from Experts

Eight Steps for Safe Eating

(NAPSA)—All raw agricultural products—from peaches to pork chops—contain bacteria naturally. Though these levels are typically extremely low, it's always safest to assume that bacteria may be present on your meat and poultry products. When these raw products are breaded and appear golden fried on the outside, it's easy to presume that they are properly cooked and ready to serve to your family.

Not so fast, says Dr. Betsy Booren, president of the North American Meat Institute Foundation (NAMIF). “While breaded, stuffed meat and poultry products appear cooked on the outside, consumers need to keep in mind that safe food handling practices and following the cooking instructions on the package are key to ensuring products are safe to eat.”

Dr. Booren highlights the essential steps to safely prepare and cook stuffed poultry products for NAMIF's latest video in its “Ask the Meat Scientist” series. The video demonstrates how to handle and cook raw stuffed poultry products while educating consumers on proper thermometer placement. Dr. Booren walks through the following eight basic food safety best practices:

1. Wash hands. Use warm, soapy water to thoroughly wash hands before and after handling raw products.

2. Separate foods. Keep raw foods separate from ready-to-eat foods.

3. Follow instructions. Always follow the cooking instructions on product packaging.

4. Preheat oven. Make sure your oven has reached the proper temperature before cooking product. Use an oven thermometer to verify your oven is heating properly.

5. Place product. Space the



No matter how you're preparing poultry, be sure to follow safe food handling practices.

products at least two inches apart on a cookie sheet to ensure good airflow and heat circulation. If using a glass dish, you may need to allow for extra cooking time.

6. Check internal temperature. When the recommended cooking time has passed, insert an instant-read food thermometer into the product. Poultry products must read at least 165 degrees Fahrenheit to be considered safe to eat.

7. Check again. Place the food thermometer into several areas of your stuffed poultry product to ensure the entire product is fully cooked. Be sure to test the top center of the meat, above the filling, as it is the last to cook through.

8. Enjoy. After verifying the internal temperature of the product has reached 165 degrees Fahrenheit, you and your family can enjoy a convenient, safe and delicious poultry dish.

NAMIF is a nonprofit research, education and information foundation established by the North America Meat Institute. The “Ask the Meat Scientist” video series is one of the foundation's many resources designed to empower consumers with information to best select and prepare safe and nutritious meat and poultry products for their families. To watch the latest video, visit <http://bit.ly/stuffedpoultrytips>.