

How to Use a Meat Thermometer

Extension Notes

Family & Consumer Sciences

Estill County Extension Office

extension.ca.uky.edu

Source: Annhall Norris, extension specialist

No one wants their dining guests or family to get sick from food they have prepared, but many people run the risk each day by not using a meat thermometer to check their food for proper doneness, relying on the color of the meat or the appearance of clear juices instead.

Meat that has not reached the proper cooking temperature runs the risk of transmitting bacteria that can cause foodborne illness to your family and friends. Meat thermometers are the only way you can ensure meat is properly cooked.

Some thermometers are oven safe, which means they are inserted into the meat before cooking and can withstand high oven temperatures. They produce readings throughout the cooking process.

Instant-read thermometers either produce a dial reading or a digital reading within 15 seconds of being inserted into the meat. Use these thermometers to check meat temperatures after removing the food from the oven or the grill. Do not leave instant-read thermometers in the oven because they cannot withstand oven temperatures.

All these thermometers will give you accurate readings. The most important thing is to purchase one if you do not already have one. Fairly inexpensive models are available at most grocery stores.

Here are some additional tips for using a meat thermometer.

- Know the proper cooking temperatures for different kinds of meat. Ground meat should be cooked to an

internal temperature of 160 degrees F. Fish, shellfish and pork should reach 145 degrees F. Poultry, casseroles and any leftovers should reach an internal temperature of 165 degrees F.

- Calibrate your thermometer before using and check its calibration often to ensure accurate readings. To calibrate, place the thermometer into an ice slurry (glass of crushed ice and water) being careful not to touch the sides or bottom of the glass. Wait at least 30 seconds before adjusting. The thermometer should read 32 degrees F. If the thermometer is not calibrated correctly, you may either need to change the battery if it is a digital one or manually calibrate the dial to 32 degrees F while still immersed in the ice slurry by turning the nut under the dial using a small wrench.

- Insert the thermometer into the thickest part of the meat without touching fat or bone. To get accurate readings on thinner cuts of meat, like hamburger and chicken strips, insert the thermometer into the meat sideways.

- Always clean the thermometer stem and tip between uses to prevent cross contamination.

Using a meat thermometer can give you peace of mind that you have properly prepared your meal, especially when cooking for others. More food safety information is available at the Estill County Extension office.

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Estill County Extension Homemakers celebrate KEHA Week, Oct. 13-19

Estill County Judge-Executive Donnie Watson has signed a proclamation designating October 13-19 as Kentucky Extension Homemaker Association Week and urges all Estill County citizens to participate in local Extension Homemaker activities.

To celebrate KEHA Week, Estill County Extension Homemakers are kicking off the new year with their annual membership drive. What is KEHA (Kentucky Extension Homemakers Association)? Well, it's an organization that offers educational programming and gives you a chance to make new friends, learn new ideas and contribute to and give back to your community. It's not just women who want to cook, sew and clean house. It's for people who want to help us bring our organization into the 21st Century. Some of the lessons presented this year will be on benefits of honey, how to know what papers are important to keep; exercise, how to identify scams, and cooking healthy foods. These lessons known as leader lessons are free, held at the Extension Office, and open to the general public. Throughout the year, we will offer special interest workshops (some free; some will have a charge) such as candy making



From left, Cheryl Stepp and Linda Parsons of Estill County Extension Homemakers, accept a proclamation from Estill County Judge/Executive Donnie Watson designating October 13-19 as Kentucky Extension Homemaker Association Week.

classes, craft classes, demonstrations on how to operate new small appliances on the market today, food preservations classes, money management, health education and also an occasional day trip.

Extension Homemakers exist in every county of Kentucky under the guidance of University of Kentucky Family & Consumer Sciences Extension agent. The organization is made up of clubs that meet monthly September through May

and individual members called "mailbox members". Annual dues are only \$8.50. We have 2 great clubs - "Sugar-N-Spice" and "Not Your Momma's Homemaker Club" and those contacts are listed below if interested in joining. We are also looking for people who might be interested in starting a club where they can hold meetings in their part of the county. We offer "Specialty" and "Support Group" clubs as well. If you have a spe-

cialty that you are interested in, please give us a call; we can help you get started. Membership is open to youth and adult, male and female.

For further information or to be a part of the Estill County Extension Homemakers organization contact Cheryl Stepp 606-723-8546, Linda Parsons 606-723-4249, Charlotte Flynn-Sutter 606-643-5850 or the Estill County Extension Office (76 Golden Court) at 606-723-4557.

Estill County Youth to Celebrate National 4-H Week October 6-12

The anticipation is building for National 4-H Week, during which millions of youth, parents, volunteers and alumni across the country will be celebrating everything 4-H. Estill County 4-H will observe National 4-H Week this year by showcasing the incredible experiences that 4-H offers young people, and will highlight the remarkable 4-H youth in our community who work each day to make a positive impact on those around them.

The theme of this year's National 4-H Week is Inspire Kids to Do, which highlights how 4-H encourages kids to take part in hands-on learning experiences in areas such as health, science, agriculture and civic engagement. The

positive environment provided by 4-H mentors ensures that kids in every county and parish in the country- from urban neighborhoods to suburban schoolyards to rural farming communities- are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles and are empowered with the skills to lead in life and career.

Unfortunately due to Estill County Schools fall break, Estill County 4-H doesn't have any formal activities planned for National 4-H Week. Estill County 4-H does encourage everyone to keep an eye on their Facebook page, Estill County 4-H for posts throughout the week to celebrate.

With the new program year begin-

ning on September 1st, many of Estill County 4-H's clubs, classes, and workshops are having their first meetings. One of the most popular activities this year is Teen Club. It is a club for youth in grades 6th through 12th. This club provides an opportunity for youth to develop leadership and communication skills as well as participate in community service.

In Estill County, more than 700 4-H youth and 100 volunteers from the community are involved in 4 H.

One of the most anticipated events of National 4-H Week every year is 4-H National Youth Science Day, which sees hundreds of thousands of youth across the nation taking part in the world's largest youth-led STEM challenge. The exciting theme for this year's challenge is Game Changers, which will run throughout October. Developed by Google and West Virginia University Extension Service, Game Changers will teach kids coding skills through fun exercises including gaming, puzzles and physical activity.

About 4-H:

4-H, the nation's largest youth development and empowerment organization, cultivates confident kids who tackle the issues that matter most in their communities right now. In the

United States, 4-H programs empower six million young people through the 110 land-grant universities and Cooperative Extension in more than 3,000 local offices serving every county and parish in the country. Outside the United States, independent, country-led 4-H organizations empower one million young people in more than 50 countries. National 4-H Council is the private sector, non-profit partner of the Cooperative Extension System and 4-H National Headquarters located at the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Learn more about National 4-H at www.4-H.org, on Facebook at www.facebook.com/4-H and on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/4H>. Learn more about Estill County 4-H and how to get involved at <https://extension.ca.uky.edu>, and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/EstillCounty4H.

Contact: Paighton Lewis, County Extension Agent for 4-H Youth Developmenten (606)723-4557, paighton.lewis@uky.edu

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