

# Food Safety

## HELPFUL HINTS FROM EXPERTS

### Knowing How To Handle Meat And Poultry

(NAPSA)—A new poll found some interesting facts to chew on regarding the public's knowledge of meat and poultry handling, cooking and safety.

Only a third (34 percent) of Americans correctly answered that a hamburger is ready to eat when the internal temperature has reached 160° F. Meanwhile, 18 percent wrongly said that checking to see if juices run clear ensures food safety.

The poll, conducted by the American Meat Institute (AMI), found that many misconceptions remain, particularly when it comes to preparing and storing raw meat and poultry products.

The survey found that men (41 percent) are much more likely than women (26 percent) to know how to identify when a hamburger is thoroughly cooked. And overall, younger Americans are less knowledgeable about proper meat preparation than older generations, the survey found. Only 16 percent of 18-to-29-year-olds know to check the internal temperature of a burger.

#### Storage Procedures

Consumers were also uncertain about proper storage temperatures. Only 36 percent of women are aware that refrigerators should be set at 40° F or below. An additional 33 percent simply admit that they don't know the correct temperature for a refrigerator.

Among members of Generation Y, only 32 percent know that refrigerators should be set to 40° F or below, compared to 52 percent of those age 30 and older.

#### Public Perception

The American public is divided over whether they believe meat



**Though today's meat products are safer than in years past, consumers still need to store and handle them properly.**

and poultry products have more or less bacteria in them today than they did 10 years ago. While 22 percent of Americans think that there is more bacteria than in the past, 26 percent believe the opposite is true.

In reality, government data show a record of sustained food safety improvements. A USDA sampling of ground beef shows that *E. coli* has decreased 45 percent since 2000, salmonella in market hogs has decreased 67 percent since 1998 and the incidence of listeria monocytogenes in ready-to-eat meat and poultry products has decreased 74 percent since 2000.

Still, AMI President J. Patrick Boyle urges consumers to follow the four basic food safety steps: clean, separate, cook and chill. He also reminds consumers to pay close attention to the safe handling labels that are included on meat and poultry products.

For more information, visit [www.meatsafety.org](http://www.meatsafety.org), and to download a new brochure on meat and poultry safety, visit [www.meatmattersinfo.org](http://www.meatmattersinfo.org).