

How to Safely Handle Ground Meat

All ground meat requires careful handling; here are some tips on how to remain safe while using ground meat in cooking:

- Immediately throw away all wrappings in the garbage
- Clean all kitchen surfaces that have been in contact with ground meat using hot soapy water, rinse and then sanitize using sanitizing wipes or spray. Wash hands well, scrubbing nails with a brush.
- Fully cook all ground meat to destroy and harmful bacteria that may be present. Cook, stirring often for five minutes after you no longer see any pink color.
- Never partially cook ground meat to finish cooking later.
- Don't re-contaminate. Always use clean utensils to remove cooked ground meat from the pan and place on a clean plate or bowl

Here are some other important things to remember:

- Read the best-before dates on packages and buy the freshest ground meat you can.
- Cook or freeze fresh ground meat within 24 hours after it was bought.
- Thaw frozen ground meat in the refrigerator and cook when it still contains some ice crystals
- If ground meat has been frozen and thawed, do not re-freeze it.
- Do not mix raw ground meat with other ingredients and freeze for cooking later.
- Don't try to guess when burgers are fully cooked. Instead, check the internal temperature of a burger by inserting an instant-read thermometer horizontally into the center of the burger. The thermometer should read at least 160 °F (71°C).

