

Safe method:

Prove it

Sometimes you might want to use a probe to prove that your methods are safe.



Safe method	What to do	How to do it
Cooking and reheating	<p>The 'Cooking safely' and 'Reheating' safe methods in the Cooking section tell you how to check that food is thoroughly cooked/reheated. If you do a different check then you will need to prove that it is safe.</p> <p>You only need to do this once. The food is safe if it has reached a high enough temperature for a long enough time.</p>	<p>If you want to check the temperature of a food, use a clean probe. Insert the probe so that the tip is in the centre of the food (or the thickest part).</p> <p>Examples of safe time/temperature combinations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 80°C for at least 6 seconds• 75°C for at least 30 seconds
Hot holding	<p>The 'Hot holding' safe method in the Cooking section tells you how to hot hold safely. It is a legal requirement that hot food must be kept above 63°C.</p>	<p>To check that food in hot holding is above 63°C, use a clean probe. Insert the probe so the tip is in the centre of the food (or the thickest part).</p>
Chilling down hot food Chilled storage and displaying chilled food	<p>The 'Chilling down hot food' safe method in the Chilling section tells you how to chill down hot food safely and the 'Chilled storage and displaying chilled food' safe method tells you how to keep food cold.</p> <p>It is a legal requirement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland that certain chilled foods must be kept at 8°C or below.</p> <p>In Scotland, the regulations do not set a specific temperature for cold foods, but foods that need to be chilled should be kept in the fridge or other chilling equipment.</p> <p>Sometimes there might be more than one way of chilling down hot food that is suitable for what you are doing. Then you might want to compare different options to find out which is most effective.</p> <p>Compare different chilling options by trying them out with the same food.</p>	<p>To check that food is at 8°C or below, use a clean probe. Insert the probe so that the tip is in the centre of the food (or the thickest part).</p> <p>When you have just cooked the food, test its temperature with a clean probe. Start to chill it using one option and test the temperature again at regular intervals to see how quickly it is dropping.</p> <p>Repeat this with other options to see which is fastest.</p>

You can record what you have done to prove your methods on the 'Prove it: records' sheet in the diary.

Using temperature probes

Probe type

Dial thermometer



Where to use the probe

These are commonly used to test meat. Some are oven-safe and can be left in the meat while it cooks. Others are not oven-safe and are designed to be inserted when you have cooked the meat.

How to use the probe

If the probe is not already in the meat, insert it and leave it for up to two minutes before taking a reading. Clean the probe thoroughly and disinfect it before you use it again. This helps to prevent cross-contamination.

Digital thermometer



These are generally easy to use and accurate. They can be used with lots of foods, but they are not suitable to go in the oven.

Insert the probe. Wait for the display to stabilise before taking a reading. Clean the probe thoroughly and disinfect it before you use it again. This helps to prevent cross-contamination.

Checking your probe

It is essential to know that your probe is working properly, so you can rely on its readings. So you should check it regularly. The manufacturer's instructions should include details of how often a probe needs to be checked and how to tell if it is accurate.

A simple way to check a digital probe is to put it in iced water and boiling water:

- The readings in iced water should be between -1°C and 1°C .
- The readings in boiling water should be between 99°C and 101°C .

If the reading is outside this range, you should replace your probe or return it to the manufacturer to be calibrated.

Looking after your probe

It is very important to keep your probe clean, otherwise it could spread dirt and harmful bacteria to the food you are testing. When a probe has been inserted into food, clean it with hot water and detergent.

You need to look after your probe to prevent it from getting damaged and help keep it working properly. Do not leave a digital probe inside your fridge or freezer, or on hot surfaces. When you are not using it, store it safely, away from extreme temperatures and liquids. Keep the probe in its case, if it has one. Avoid banging or dropping your probe. If the battery is low, replace it immediately.