

SAFE METHOD:

PROVE IT





Use of a disinfected temperature probe to measure temperatures will help to prove that your methods are safe. You can record details of these checks in the Prove It: Records section.

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 food is thoroughly cooked/reheated. If you do a different check then you will need to prove it is safe.</p> <p>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 disinfected probe. Insert the probe so the tip is in the centre of the food (or the thickest part).</p> <p>Examples of safe time/temperature combinations are listed in the 'Cooking safely' safe method.</p>
Hot holding	<p>To check food in hot holding is at or above 63°C, use a clean, disinfected probe. Insert the probe so the tip is in the centre of the food (or the thickest part).</p>	<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 at or above 63°C.</p>
Chilling down hot food	<p>The 'Chilling down hot food' safe method in the Chilling section tells you how to chill down hot food safely.</p> <p>Sometimes there might be more than one way of chilling down hot food that is suitable for what you are doing. 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>When you have just cooked the food, test its temperature at the centre (or thickest part) with a clean, disinfected 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>
Chilled storage and displaying chilled food	<p>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, and recommended in Scotland, that certain chilled foods must be kept at 8°C or below.</p>	<p>To check food is at 8°C or below, use a disinfected probe. Insert the probe so the tip is in the centre of the food (or the thickest part).</p>
Freezing	<p>The Freezing safe method in the Chilling section tells you how to freeze food safely.</p> <p>Frozen food should be kept at -18°C or below.</p>	<p>You can use the digital display or a dial thermometer to check your freezer is keeping food at a safe temperature.</p>

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





THERMOMETER TYPE	WHERE TO USE THE THERMOMETER	HOW TO USE THE THERMOMETER
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.	Clean and disinfect the probe, then 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.
Infra-red thermometer 	These types of thermometers are used for testing cold surface temperatures of food when delivered or in fridges and freezers. They cannot be used for checking the temperature in the centre of cooked, reheated, or cooling food.	Direct the probe at the surface of the food avoiding any reflective packaging or sticky labels (as this gives a false reading). If the temperature seems high, use a clean, disinfected probe thermometer to confirm the reading.

CHECKING YOUR PROBE

It is essential to know that your probe is working properly, so you can rely on its readings. The manufacturer's instructions should include details of how often a probe needs to be checked and how to tell if it is accurate. If instructions aren't available still ensure the probe is checked regularly, for example once a month.

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. Before the probe is inserted into food, clean and disinfect it, and again after use.

Probe wipes are a good way to clean and disinfect probe thermometers, however make sure the wipes don't dry out as then they won't disinfect properly.

You need to look after your probe to prevent it from getting damaged and help keep it working properly. Avoid leaving a digital probe inside a fridge, freezer or on hot surfaces for a long period of time. 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.