

Dear Educator,

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has recently announced a lowered recommendation for cooking pork safely. Instead of cooking to an internal temperature of 160°, pork is now considered to be done when it reaches 145° F, followed by a three-minute rest.

This recommendation serves to enhance the texture and flavor of pork recipes, and opens up new opportunities for pork to take its place among the lean meat options that fulfill the USDA's **MyPlate** food guidelines designed to help in making better food choices.

To reinforce the guidelines as well as introduce the latest safe handling recommendations for pork and other meats, the National Pork Board and the award-winning curriculum specialists at Young Minds Inspired (YMI) have teamed up to create this 2012 supplement to the *Step Up to a Healthier You* program (available online at www.ymiclassroom.com/pork.html).

We encourage you to share this supplement with your school's food service director and your fellow educators. Although it is copyrighted, you may make as many copies as you need.

Please let us know your thoughts on this program by commenting online at www.ymiclassroom.com/pork.html. We depend on your feedback to continue providing free educational programs that make a real difference in students' lives.

Sincerely,



Dr. Dominic Kinsley
Editor in Chief
Young Minds Inspired



YMI is the only company developing free, innovative classroom materials that is owned and directed by award-winning former teachers. Visit our website at www.ymiclassroom.com to send feedback and download more free programs. For questions contact us at 1-800-859-8005 or email us at feedback@ymiclassroom.com.

Target Audience

This supplement is designed for students in high school Family and Consumer Science classes. It can be tailored to suit the needs and abilities of your students.

National Standards Alignment

This supplement meets the following Family and Consumer Science Standards:

- Demonstrate nutrition and wellness practices that enhance individual and family well-being.
- Demonstrate ability to acquire, handle, and use foods to meet nutrition and wellness needs of individuals and families.
- Evaluate food plans, preparation techniques, and specialized dietary plans.
- Evaluate factors that affect food safety, from production through consumption.

How to Use This Program

Review the information in this guide and on the activity master. Make copies of the master for each student and schedule time to complete the activity in class. Have students take the activity sheet home and review it with their parents.

What Research Says About the Benefits of Pork

The 2010 USDA Dietary Guidelines encourage Americans to choose foods that are high in nutrient density and low in energy density. Protein from lean meats such as pork fits both criteria: Pork provides the necessary nutrients with relatively fewer calories.

- **Nutrition.** Calories from dietary fats are no higher or lower among those eating pork as compared with those who do not eat pork. This supports dietary variety and helps increase intake of important nutrients while keeping total fat and calories in check when pork is added to the daily diet.
- **Late-Night Munchie Abatement.** Including lean pork or other proteins in three daily meals has been shown to reduce late-night desires to eat and decreases distracting thoughts about food.
- **Meals with Protein Most Filling.** Including lean pork or other lean proteins in three daily meals results in an improved feeling of fullness, and feeling full throughout the day may lead to an overall reduction in calories consumed.
- **Bacon for Breakfast.** Eating high-quality protein foods such as lean Canadian bacon results in a greater sense of fullness throughout the day compared to eating additional protein calories at lunch or dinner.

Activity Master: Cook It Right: Keep It Safe

Review the cooking recommendations in the chart with your students. Explain that the recommended

internal temperature for all cuts of pork except ground meat has been reduced, from 160° to 145° F, followed by a three-minute rest period.

Quiz Answers:

1. **True.** Sealed, prepackaged fresh pork cuts can be kept in the refrigerator for 2-4 days; sealed ground pork will keep in the refrigerator for 1-2 days.
2. **False.** Never brown or partially cook any meat.
3. **False.** If food has been left in the “danger zone”—between 40° and 140° F—for more than 2 hours, discard it even though it may look and smell good. Never taste a food to see if it is spoiled. It is always best to use the rule, “When in doubt, throw it out.”
4. **True.** Follow the manufacturer's guidelines for defrosting meat and then cook it immediately.
5. **True.** According to the USDA, it is safe to refreeze food that has thawed in the refrigerator without cooking it, although there may be a loss of quality due to the moisture lost during defrosting.
6. **True.** Fresh cuts of pork can generally be kept in the freezer for up to 6 months, although ground pork should be kept only for 3 months.
7. **False.** The National Pork Board does not encourage freezing cooked ham, since it affects the quality and texture of the meat. However, it can be cut into slices or cubes and frozen for use in soups or casseroles.
8. **True.** Because of modern feeding practices, trichinosis is no longer a concern.
9. **True.** It is safe to cook frozen or partially frozen pork in the oven or on the stove or grill without defrosting it first, although the cooking time may be about 50% longer. Do not cook frozen pork in a slow cooker.
10. **False.** Leftovers can be kept in the refrigerator for up to 2 days, or in the freezer for up to 3 months.

Ask students to take the activity sheet home and review the cooking chart and safe handling recommendations with their families.

Activity Extension:

Have students plan and prepare a family meal that features pork, using the new cooking guidelines and safe handling recommendations. See below for recipe resources.

Additional Resources

- Pork and Nutrition: www.porkandhealth.org
- Kid-friendly Recipes: www.porkbeinspired.com
- Young Minds Inspired: www.ymiclassroom.com

Cook It Right: Keep It Safe

A Matter of Degrees

Today's pork is very lean, and it's important not to overcook it. Always use an accurate meat thermometer when you cook pork (and other meats), and follow these guidelines:

- Cook roasts, tenderloins, and chops to an internal temperature of 145° F, followed by a three-minute rest period.
- Ground pork, like all ground meat, should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160° F.
- Pre-cooked ham can be reheated to an internal temperature of 140° F or it can be enjoyed cold.

The chart shows some recommended cooking times for some common cooking methods and common cuts of pork. You can find more information about cooking times at www.porkbeinspired.com.



Method	Cut	Thickness/Weight	Internal Temp. (F°)	Average Recommended Cooking Time
Roasting (at 350° unless otherwise noted)	Loin Roast	2–5 lbs.	145°	20 minutes per lb.
	Tenderloin (roast at 425°)	½–1½ lbs.	145°	20–27 minutes total
	Ribs	—	Tender	1½–2 hours
Broiling (4–5 inches from heat) OR Grilling (over direct, medium heat)	Loin Chops	¾"	145°	8–9 minutes total
	Loin Kabobs	1" cubes	Tender	10–15 minutes
	Ground Pork Patties	½"	160°	8–10 minutes total
Barbecuing (over indirect medium heat)	Loin Roast	2 lbs.	145°	20 minutes per lb.
	Ribs	—	Tender	1½–2 hours total
Sautéing (in oil over medium–high heat)	Cutlets	¼"	Tender	3–4 minutes total
	Tenderloin Medallions	¼–½"	Tender	4–8 minutes total
	Ground Pork Patties	½"	160°	8–10 minutes total

Handle with Care

It's important to know how to handle meats such as pork safely. Answer **True** or **False** to each of these statements to test your knowledge of safe handling procedures for pork and other meat.

- 1. It's okay to store fresh pork, excluding ground pork, in the refrigerator for 2-4 days before cooking.
- 2. It's okay to brown fresh pork in the morning and finish cooking it just before dinner.
- 3. It's safe to eat leftover meat that has been sitting in the kitchen overnight, because it has been cooked.
- 4. It's okay to thaw frozen meat in the microwave.
- 5. It's safe to refreeze frozen meat that has thawed while in the refrigerator.
- 6. Fresh cuts of pork such as roasts, chops, and tenderloin can be kept in the freezer for up to 6 months.
- 7. It's okay to freeze leftover cooked ham.
- 8. Trichinosis in pork is no longer a concern.
- 9. It's okay to cook a frozen or partially frozen pork roast without thawing it completely.
- 10. Leftover pork roast will keep for up to a week in the refrigerator.

Use this checklist to ensure that you handle meat safely at home in your kitchen:

Cooking

- We have a meat thermometer and we use it every time we cook meat.
- We always wash our hands with hot water and soap before handling meat, poultry, and fish.
- We make sure to immediately scrub hands, utensils, cutting boards, and anything else that comes into contact with raw meat, poultry, and fish with hot water and soap.

Serving

- We always use clean dishes and utensils to serve cooked food.
- We never leave cooked food out for more than 2 hours before or after we eat.
- We use separate utensils for each dish.

Storing

- Our refrigerator is set at 40° F or below and the freezer is at 0° F.
- We put raw meat, poultry, and fish in a plastic bag and on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator so they won't drip on other foods.
- We freeze meat, poultry, and fish immediately if we're not going to use it within a day or two.

To learn more about meat safety, go to the Food Safety page at www.porkandhealth.org.