

# Preparation and serving of medium-cooked minced meat burgers



## Recommendations for food business operators

Medium-cooked (semi-cooked) minced meat burgers are associated with, among other things, the risk of EHEC food poisoning. When raw meat is minced, the bacteria on the surface of the meat get mixed with the inner parts of the meat. When the minced meat burger is fully cooked, the bacteria are destroyed. If the minced meat burger is left semi-cooked, the bacteria can survive in the middle and cause food poisoning.

### You can reduce the EHEC risk in the following ways:

- Always serve minced meat burgers fully cooked, especially for children and for elderly adults.
- Always ask adults how well done they want their minced meat burgers. Don't assume.
- Give customers the option of ordering their minced meat burgers fully cooked in online stores, too.
- Do not use shop-bought or industrially prepared minced meat unless the manufacturer guarantees that the minced meat can be left medium-cooked.

### Prepare medium-cooked minced meat burger as follows:

1. Take care of good kitchen hygiene.
2. Handle raw meat separately from other foods. Also avoid spreading bacteria through tools or surfaces to cooked food or other ready-to-eat foods.
3. Use fresh and good quality whole meat, which is hygienically handled and stored and the cold chain of which has been maintained. However, also fresh meat that has been properly handled and stored may also contain EHEC bacteria or other pathogens.
4. Cook the surface of the piece of meat, for example, by frying, and then cut the heat treated surface parts off. Heating the surfaces reduces the risk of bacteria ending up in the interior of the meat with knife.
5. Grind the inside of the meat into minced meat, from which the steaks are shaped.
6. Use the minced meat within 24 hours of grinding.

You can eliminate the EHEC risk by fully cooking minced meat burgers. However, this means that the burger can no longer be called medium-cooked. The Finnish Food Authority recommends serving minced meat burgers fully cooked to all diners so that the internal temperature

- either has reached +75 °C measured at the thickest point
- or remained at +70 °C for 2 minutes.

The colour of the meat does not always indicate maturity, which is why it is important to measure the temperature.

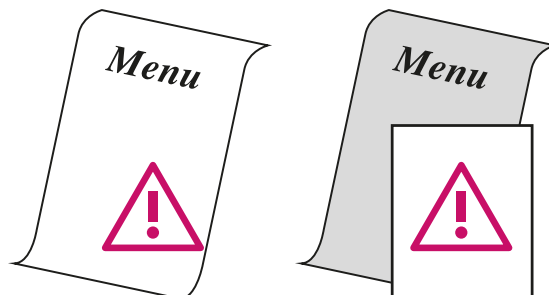


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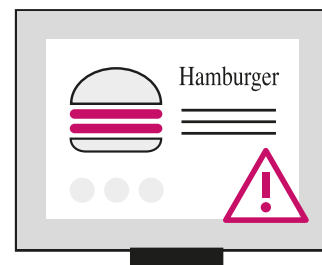
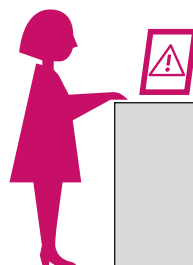
### Give customers information about the EHEC risk

However, if you serve medium-cooked minced meat burgers, you can inform customers about the EHEC risk for example by using a warning text. This allows customers to make a conscious choice about their own health.



Example of warning text:

*The Finnish Food Authority recommends that minced meat burgers should always be eaten fully cooked. Medium-cooked minced meat may contain EHEC bacteria which can cause severe food poisoning especially in children and elderly adults.*



For example, this warning text can be added:

- the menu listing of a serving
- a separate menu page or leaflet
- a place that diners see when ordering or collecting their food
- in the online store and other distance selling in connection with product information.

### What is EHEC bacteria?

- EHEC means for enterohaemorrhagic *E. coli* -bacteria.
- EHEC bacteria are also found in Finnish cattle and meat of Finnish origin.
- People can become infected by eating medium-cooked minced meat, for example.
- EHEC bacteria can cause food poisoning for anyone. Typical symptoms of EHEC infection are abdominal pain and bloody diarrhoea. Pre-school age children and the elderly adults are particularly vulnerable to the most severe forms of the infection (haemolytic-uremic syndrome), which can be life-threatening and lead to permanent kidney damage.
- EHEC bacteria are destroyed by fully cooking the meat.



### Further information:

- Sampling requirements for medium-cooked minced meat burgers in retail shops <https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/foodstuffs/food-sector/instructions-and-legislation/> -> Microbiological sampling and requirements, Attachment 9 Retail shops (.pdf, in Finnish)
- Serving medium-cooked minced meat burgers (in Finnish): <https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/en/foodstuffs/food-sector/product-and-industry-specific-requirements/meat-and-meat-products/medium-cooked-minced-meat-burgers/>
- EHEC bacteria (in Finnish, THL - Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare): <https://thl.fi/fi/web/infektiotaudit-ja-rokotukset/taudit-ja-torjunta/taudit-ja-taudinaiheuttajat-a-o/ehec>

