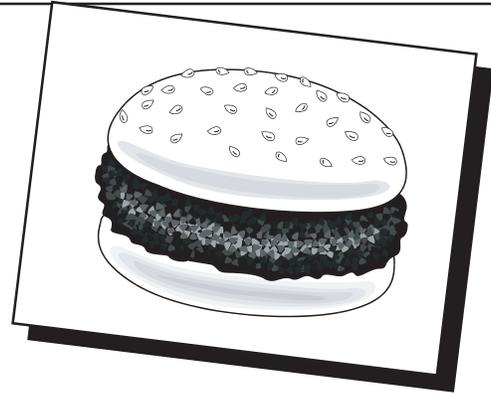


The All American Hamburger



Americans are incredibly fortunate. We pay the least for food of any industrial country on earth; yet have access to products from all over the world. But perhaps most important, our food supply is incredibly safe!

This is not by accident. Farmers, producers, manufacturers, retailers and government all play important roles in minimizing your risk of foodborne illness.

Come take a behind-the-scenes look at all that's done by your Minnesota Department of Agriculture and others to bring you safe, wholesome food — the All American Hamburger!

- **The animal feed supply is monitored for safety.** Feed ingredients, pharmaceuticals (antibiotics, drugs, etc.) and pesticides must all be registered and approved for their intended use. Laboratory analysis confirms that the feed meets safety standards.
- **Slaughtered animals are inspected for wholesomeness.**
- **The environment, the equipment and the meat in processing plants are routinely tested for Salmonella, E.coli and Listeria (foodborne pathogens).** E.coli 0157:h7 and other foodborne pathogens can colonize the intestines of animals and food handlers which could contaminate muscle meat and other surfaces during slaughter. These bacteria, along with bacteria that cause spoilage, cannot be seen or smelled. In order to verify that cleaning, sanitation and other performance standards are met, surfaces are analyzed for the presence of bacteria. This sampling program helps determine the effectiveness of the pathogen reduction efforts.
- **The meat industry uses Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points (HACCP) to prevent factor that cause foodborne illness.** HACCP is the systematic identification of likely hazards and the development of an overall plan to prevent or control such critical control points. Manufacturers are responsible for analyzing their production systems and identifying key places where contamination of products may occur. The system works to minimize the likelihood of contamination occurring in the first place. Corrective action plans are developed in advance, including recall procedures in case a problem is identified to prevent the food product from entering the marketplace or from being consumed.

- **Meat plants and grocery stores are licensed and inspected for cleanliness and good sanitation.** An inspector’s presence helps ensure that the meat is properly processed, handled, packaged, stored and labeled. The inspector reviews HACCP plans developed by the industry, collects and submits samples to the laboratory for analysis, inspects plant and equipment, and determines that Standard Sanitation Operating Procedures (SSOPs) such as pest control, employee hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing are followed.
- **Irradiation can be used as a tool to destroy foodborne bacteria.** During irradiation, foods are exposed briefly to a radiant energy source such as x-ray or electron beams. Irradiation is not a substitute for proper food manufacturing or handling procedures. It is often called cold pasteurization and, like milk pasteurization, destroys harmful bacteria and most spoilage organisms but does not sterilize the product. Care is necessary to prevent recontamination of the irradiated food products through mishandling. The irradiation process may cause a small loss of nutrients but no more than with other processing methods such as cooking, canning or heat pasteurization. Federal rules require irradiated foods to be labeled as such.
- **Refrigeration helps control bacterial growth and proper cooking destroys bacteria that may be present.** Temperature is one critical control point throughout the processing of beef into a hamburger patty for our dinner. Cold temperatures below 40°F during processing, transportation and storage keep bacterial growth to a minimum. Ground beef should be cooked to an internal temperature of 160°F and measured with a thermometer. Color of the meat or meat juices are not a good indication of doneness.
- **Labeling informs consumers about safe handling instructions for the meat about ingredients for individuals with allergen concerns and about a safe length of time to keep the product.** Safe handling instructions on all packages of new meat tell the consumer how to safely store, prepare and handle raw meat and poultry products in the home to avoid foodborne illness. An ingredient statement will identify any other ingredients besides beef such as soy extender which may be of interest to individuals with allergies. Expiration dates are not required because the shelf life varies considerably based on temperature but any ground beef which has not been used within two days of purchase should be cooked or frozen.

For additional food safety information, contact;

USDA’s Meat and Poultry Hotline	1-800-535-4555
FDA’s Food Information & Seafood Hotline	1-800-332-4010
EPA’s Pesticide Right-to-know Website	Information Desk 651-296-1592
Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture’s Agronomy & Plant Protection	651-296-6121
Minnesota Dept. of Agriculture’s Website	www.mda.state.mn.us