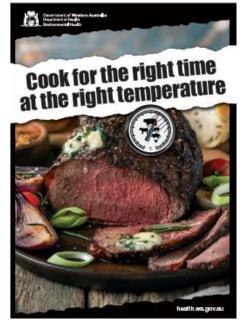# Cook for the right time at the right temperature

Ever since cavepeople first set up campfires and started roasting their kill, humans have enjoyed a whole new set of flavours in food. Cooking not only improves flavour but also reduces the chances of foodborne illness.

The way we cook our food is as important as the way we prepare and store it. Inadequate cooking is a common cause of food poisoning. Fortunately, most harmful microorganisms can be destroyed by cooking food for the right time to achieve the desired internal temperature.

Time and temperature are very important for cooking food properly. Some food businesses rely on foods being roughly the same size so that a cooking device can be set to a point and then cooked to a pre-determined time.

- Cook mince (including burger patties), sausages, whole chickens or stuffed meats right through to the centre. You should not be able to see any pink meat and the juices should be clear.
- Cook steak, chops and whole cuts of red meat to your preference as food poisoning bacteria are mostly on the surface.
- Cook fish until it flakes easily with a fork.
- Cook foods made from eggs such as omelettes and baked egg custards thoroughly.

As an example, cooking food to a temperature of 72°C for 2 minutes will reduce Listeria monocytogenes to a 6 log reduction. A 6 log reduction reduces the bacterial count from 1,000,000 to <1.