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Release: FSIS Sponsored Study Published in the Journal of Food Protection

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WASHINGTON, July 8, 2020 – The Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) is announcing the publication of “[An Observational Study of Thermometer Use by Consumers When Preparing Ground Turkey Patties](#)” in the July 2020 *Journal of Food Protection*. The 2018 observational study investigated the use of food thermometers by consumers when preparing a meal that included ground turkey patties. FSIS is the public health agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that ensures the safety of meat, poultry, and egg products and educates consumers on safe food practices.

“As a food scientist, it’s important that we publish these results in peer-reviewed journals and that other scientists have access to the methodology and results,” said USDA’s Under Secretary for Food Safety Dr. Mindy Brashears. “This is in direct alignment with my goal to lead food safety using science, and we are ensuring that our safe food handling and cooking recommendations are grounded in science and are designed to help prevent foodborne illness.”

The observational study was designed with participants randomly assigned to either a group that was shown an [educational video](#) on food thermometer use or a group that was not shown the video. Researchers observed both groups as they prepared turkey patties in a test kitchen. The study data were collected in six test kitchen facilities in two locations in North Carolina – one urban and one rural.

Even though participants in both groups were likely to own a food thermometer (62% overall), the test kitchen results told a completely different story about their thermometer use. Seventy-five percent of those who saw the food safety video checked that their turkey patties were done by using a food thermometer, compared to only 34% in the group that did not see the video.

Participants in the video group were also twice as likely to insert the food thermometer correctly in the turkey patty compared to the non-video group (52% and 23%, respectively). Most participants who used a food thermometer remembered to check the internal temperature of both patties (82% of the video group and 73% of the non-video group). Even when those in the non-video group used a food thermometer, nearly half (46%) did not cook the turkey patties to the safe internal temperature of 165°F. FSIS recommends cooking poultry products to a safe internal temperature of 165°F, the temperature at which it is hot enough to kill harmful germs that cause food poisoning. For information on how to properly handle meat and poultry products go to our food safety [webpage](#).

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