

Preparing and serving medium-cooked minced meat burgers

Recommendations for food business operators

Medium-cooked (semi-cooked) minced meat burgers are associated with a risk of EHEC food poisoning.

You can reduce the EHEC risk in the following ways:

- Always serve minced meat burgers fully cooked to children
- 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.

How to prepare a minced meat burger

1. Handle raw meat separately from other foodstuffs and ingredients.
2. Use fresh and good quality whole meat, the cold chain of which has been maintained.
3. Remove the outer surface of the whole meat cut. Alternatively, you can first cook the surface of the piece of meat and then remove the outer surface. Cooking the surface further reduces the risk.
4. After removing the (cooked) surface mince the meat into minced meat which can then be made into burgers.
5. Use the minced meat as soon as possible.

You can remove 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 (Ruokavirasto) recommends serving minced meat burgers fully cooked to all diners, so that the internal temperature is

- +75 °C at the thickest point OR
- so that the temperature has remained at +70 °C for 2 minutes.



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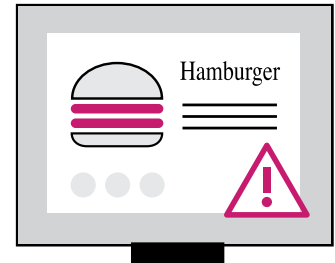
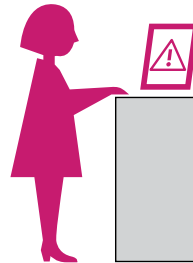
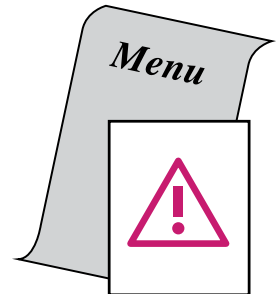
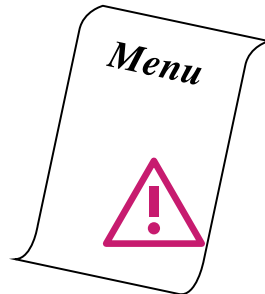
Give customers information about the EHEC risk

You can tell customers about the EHEC risk, for example by using a warning text. This allows customers to make an informed choice about their own health. Example of a warning text:

The Finnish Food Authority recommends that minced meat burgers should always be 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 to

- the menu listing of a serving
- a separate menu page or leaflet
- a place that diners see when ordering or collecting their food
- the product information in online sales



How do bacteria end up inside a minced meat burger?

When raw meat is minced, the bacteria on the surface of the meat get mixed with the inner parts of the meat. When a minced meat burger is fully cooked the bacteria are destroyed. If a minced meat burger is only semi-cooked the bacteria can survive and cause food poisoning.

What is EHEC bacteria?

- EHEC means enterohaemorrhagic *E. coli* -bacteria.
- EHEC bacteria are also found in Finnish cattle and in Finnish meat.
- People can become infected by eating medium-cooked minced meat, for example.
- Anyone can get EHEC food poisoning.
- Pre-school age children and elderly adults are particularly vulnerable to the severe form of the infection.
- 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/tietoa-meista/asiointi/oppaat-ja-lomakkeet/yriytykset/elintarvikeala/oppaat/> -> Microbiological sampling and requirements, Attachment 9 Retail shops (.pdf, in Finnish)
- Serving medium-cooked minced meat burgers (in Finnish): <https://www.ruokavirasto.fi/yriytykset/elintarvikeala/elintarvikealan-yhteiset-vaatimukset/elintarvikehygienia/puoliraakojen-jauhelihapihvien-tarjoilu/>
- EHEC bacteria (in Finnish, THL - Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare): <https://thl.fi/fi/web/infektioaudit-ja-rokotukset/taudit-ja-torjunta/taudit-ja-taudinaiheuttajat-a-o/ehec>



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