

This Type of Steak Could Make You Seriously Sick

Source: *MSN Lifestyle*



If you buy steak at the grocery store, you're going to want to take a second or even third look at the label before you fire up the grill. According to NPR, a new code on beef products indicates whether the cuts have been mechanically tenderized.

Not sure exactly what that means? Can't say we blame you. This label is a brand new requirement from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) that went into effect this week. Most likely because "mechanical tenderizing" means the beef has been punctured with blades or needles to break down the muscle fibers and make it melt-in-your-mouth tender-but it also results in a greater risk of contamination.

This is particularly scary because pathogens like E. coli and salmonella that might have only been on the surface of your steak are now transferred to the inside, making it harder to kill the bacteria completely. What's more, NPR reports that approximately 2.7 billion pounds of the beef has been mechanically tenderized according to FSIS. So until now, we were all really risking it with e. coli contamination because we had no labels to tell us otherwise.

Now that the regulation has taken effect, here's what you need to look out for: Labels that read "blade tenderized" and are followed by hyper-specific cooking instructions like "cook until steak reaches an internal temperature of 145 degrees F as measured by a food thermometer and allow to rest for three minutes."

And whatever you do, don't rely on your eyesight alone. "It doesn't look any different," says a spokesman for USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service. "It's not filled with visible holes from the needle piercings."