



FOOD: SAFELY REMOVING GRISTLE FROM MEAT

INTRODUCTION

Gristle is connective tissue that is found on meat. Gristle is also known as elastin, silver skin, or sinew. Gristle does not break down during the cooking process and can be tough to chew if it isn't removed. Removing gristle from meat could potentially expose employees to harm. Following the safe work practices presented in this lesson will help ensure employee safety.



HAZARDS

When removing gristle, employees could potentially be exposed to the following hazards:

- Cuts or lacerations

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Employees should wear the appropriate personal protective equipment, which may include:

- Cut-resistant gloves
- Non-slip, closed-toe shoes





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SAFE WORK PRACTICES

Before removing the gristle, employees should do the following:

- Inspect all provided PPE for damage. Report damaged PPE to your supervisor. Do NOT use damaged PPE.
- Inspect knives for damage. Report damaged knives to your supervisor. Do NOT use damaged knives.
- Ensure that all knives are sharp. Sharpen knives as needed. Do NOT use dull knives.
- Sharpen knives in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

When removing gristle, employees should do the following:

- Use the appropriate knife for the task.
- Only employees with the proper knife skills should use a knife to remove gristle.
- Ensure that you are using the appropriately sized cutting board for both the meat and knife.
- Only remove gristle on a stable cutting board or flat surface.
- When feasible, have the blade facing away from your body.
- Ensure that you have a good grip on the knife handle.
- Ensure that you have a good grip on the gristle.
 - Depending on the piece of gristle, employees may use a paper towel or their hand in place of using a knife to remove the gristle.
- When not in use, knives should be set on either the cutting board or a flat surface.
- Ensure that gristle pieces are properly disposed of in the trash or designated container. Gristle on the floor could pose a slipping hazard.
- Once the task of removing gristle is finished, employees should properly clean and store the knives used in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and their company's policy.
- Report all cuts or laceration injuries to your supervisor. Wash wounds with soap and water. Employees should seek medical treatment for wounds that require stitches.

CONCLUSION

Gristle can be found on many types of meat as it is connective tissue. Gristle does not break down during the cooking process so many cooks and butchers remove it prior to cooking or selling meat. Employees who remove gristle could potentially be exposed to harm. By following the safe work practices presented in this lesson, employees can help minimize their chances of an accident occurring when removing gristle.

