Per the 2022 FDA Food Code, subparagraph 3-401.11(C)(2) “A raw or undercooked WHOLE-MUSCLE, INTACT BEEF steak may be served or offered for sale in a READY-TO-EAT form” if it is INTACT and seared. This is because pathogens should only be present on the surface. The following decision-tree may be used to determine if a steak is INTACT. A steak is INTACT if it has not undergone COMMINUTION, MECHANICAL TENDERIZATION, vacuum tumbling with solutions, or reconstruction, cubing or pounding. If a steak is non-INTACT, pathogens may be on the inside. Therefore, a non-INTACT steak should be cooked to 155°F for 17 seconds or equivalent per 3-401.11(A)(2).

---

**Intact Steak Decision-Tree for Food Establishments and Regulators**

*Use this as a guide in determining whether your steak is intact or non-intact.*

Q1. Looking at the label, does it have any of the following terms indicating the steak is MECHANICALLY TENDERIZED?
- "Mechanically tenderized"
- "Blade tenderized"
- "Needle tenderized"

Reference: [9 CFR317.2(e)(3)]

**YES**  →  **NO**

- **Steak is non-INTACT** and should not be served undercooked without a consumer advisory per 3-401.11(A)(2)

Q2. Looking at the label, does it have any of the following terms indicating the steak was vacuum tumbled with solutions?
- "Containing X% added solutions"
- "Contains X% added solutions"

Reference: [9 CFR 317.2(e)(2)(i)]

**YES**  →  **NO**

- **Steak is non-INTACT** and should not be served undercooked without a consumer advisory per 3-401.11(A)(2)

Q3. Looking at the label, does the label have any of the following terms indicating the steak is reconstructed?
- "Formed"
- "Chunked and formed"
- "Sliced and formed"

Reference: [FSIS Food Policy and Labeling Book]

**YES**  →  **NO**

- **Product is non-INTACT** and can not be served undercooked without a consumer advisory per 3-401.11(A)(2)

Q4. Looking at the product, does the steak appear cubed or pounded?

**NOTE:** The term “cubing” or “cubed” generally refers to the process of flattening and knitting together meat into cutlet size products by means of a machine as shown in this picture and does NOT refer to cubes of stew meat.

Reference: [64 FR2803]

**YES**  →  **NO**

- **Product is non-INTACT** and can not be served undercooked without a consumer advisory per 3-401.11(A)(2)

If you answered "no" to Q1-Q4 then the steak is **INTACT** and may be served undercooked without a consumer advisory per 3-4011(c)