

# CHILL

## Refrigerate Promptly

Bacteria grow most rapidly in the Danger Zone — the unsafe temperatures between 40° F and 140° F — so it's key to keep foods out of this temperature range. Since cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying . . . be sure to refrigerate foods quickly!



## The Top 4 Cool Rules

- 1. The Chill Factor** — Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods, and leftovers within two hours or less. Marinate foods in the refrigerator.
- 2. The Thaw Law** — Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, in cold water, or in the microwave if you'll be cooking it immediately.
- 3. Divide and Conquer** — Separate large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.
- 4. Avoid the Pack Attack** — Don't over-stuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to keep food safe.

## Serve & Preserve



**When serving cold food at a buffet, picnic, or barbecue, keep these “chilling” tips in mind.**

- Cold foods should be kept at 40° F or colder.
- Keep all perishable foods chilled right up until serving time.
- Place containers of cold food on ice for serving to make sure they stay cold.
- It's particularly important to keep custards, cream pies, and cakes with whipped-cream or cream-cheese frostings refrigerated. Don't serve them if refrigeration is not possible.



## 'Fridge Quiz!

*Put your knowledge of proper refrigeration to the test.*

1. Should hot food be placed directly in the refrigerator?  
*YES or NO*
2. Refrigeration prevents bacterial growth.  
*TRUE or FALSE*
3. At what temperature should you set your refrigerator? \_\_\_° F

### Answers:

1. Yes, but divide large quantities of food into shallow containers for quicker cooling.
2. False. Refrigeration *slows*, but does not prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.
3. 40° F to discourage the growth of foodborne bacteria. Use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature of your refrigerator regularly.



## The Big THAW

Foods must remain at a safe temperature while thawing. Now is the perfect time to learn about the **DOs** and **DON'Ts** of defrosting.

### Defrosting DOs

- Defrost food in the refrigerator. This is the safest method for all foods.
- Short on time? Thaw meat and poultry in airtight packaging in cold water. Change the water every 30 minutes, so the food continues to thaw.
- Defrost food in the microwave *only* if it will be cooked immediately.
- You can thaw food as part of the cooking process, but make sure food reaches its safe internal temperature.

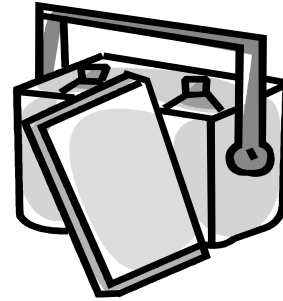
### Defrosting DON'Ts

- Avoid keeping foods in the Danger Zone — the unsafe temperatures between 40° F and 140° F.
- Don't defrost food in hot water.
- Don't thaw food on the counter. Food left out at room temperature longer than two hours is not within a safe temperature range. It may not be safe to eat.

If you have questions or concerns about food safety, contact:

- **The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Meat and Poultry Hotline** at (888) 674-6854 or (800) 256-7072 (TTY).
- **The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Food Information Line** at (888) SAFE FOOD.
- **The Fight BAC!** <sup>(R)</sup> website at: [www.fightbac.org](http://www.fightbac.org).

## Hit the Road!



*When traveling with food, be aware that time, temperature, and a cold source are key. Here are some tips to help keep your travels cool!*

- Keep frozen foods in the refrigerator or freezer until you're ready to go.
- Always use ice or cold packs and fill your cooler with food. A full cooler will maintain its cold temperatures longer than one that is partially filled.
- When traveling, keep the cooler in the air-conditioned passenger compartment of your car, rather than in a hot trunk.
- If you've asked for a doggie bag to take home from a restaurant, it should be refrigerated within two hours of serving.

### Did You Know?

*23% of consumers' refrigerators are not cold enough!*

(Audits International, 1998)



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