

COLD FACTS ABOUT HOME FOOD PREPERATION

Your Refrigerator

- Your refrigerator should be set at 41°F or less in order to keep your food cold.
- The refrigerator is coldest just below the freezer unit at the top of the cabinet and warmest at the bottom of the cabinet
- Do not store milk or other perishable foods in the refrigerator door. The door is not the coldest part of the refrigerator.
- Place an accurate thermometer in your refrigerator
- Keep the inside of the refrigerator clean. Not only the interior, but check for lint and dirt at the motor and air supply areas also
- Check the gaskets around the doors. Be sure that they are flexible and prevent cold air from escaping.
- If your refrigerator is not self-defrosting, defrost when the ice buildup on the cooling coils is ¼ inch thick



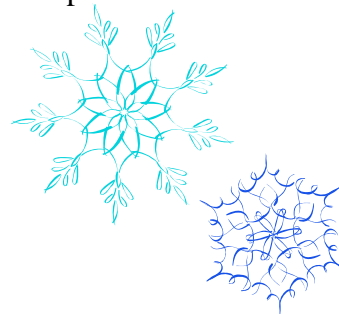
Leftovers

Don't be fooled by the old myth about leftovers sitting on the counter to cool. Instead, immediately cool hot food leftovers at or below 41°F. Place food in shallow containers or divide food into smaller containers to quickly cool food.

If leftovers are not used within 48 hours, discard or freeze them. Remember that some foods such as bacon, ham or other processed meats may not freeze well for quality reasons.

Freezer Storage

- Do not let frozen food sit on the counter to thaw
- Freezers should be maintained close to 0°F.
- Pre-chill foods before putting into freezer. Warm food products will raise the temperature of the freezer



Thawing Food

Use one of the following methods to thaw potentially hazardous foods:

1. Under refrigeration at 41°F or less
2. Completely submerged under running water (with overflow, 70°F water temperature)
3. As part of the cooking process
4. In the microwave oven and then immediately transferred to cooking equipment with not interruption in the process

**Potentially hazardous food is any food that consist in whole or in part of milk or milk products, eggs, meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, edible crustacean or other ingredients, including synthetic ingredients, and which is in a form capable of supporting rapid and progressive growth of infections or toxigenic microorganisms.

The temperature danger zone is:

41 °F through 135°F

Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold or don't keep them at all !!

Why Refrigerate???

The world is teeming with bacteria (germs). Some are good like those that help us to make cheese, vinegar and sour cream. Some are bad like those that cause food spoilage or product foodborne illness.

To grow and reproduce, bacteria need three conditions: moisture, warmth and food. If any one of these necessities is missing, bacteria will not grow.

Before refrigeration, people dried foods to preserve them. When moisture was removed from fresh food, bacteria could not grow and cause spoilage or food poisoning.

In the days before mechanical refrigeration, many homeowners used iceboxes. Men would deliver ice to homes and stores in a box that kept foods cold. One problem...iceboxes only cooled to about 50°F and some bacteria still grew.

The normal home refrigerator should be set at 41°F or below and a freezer at close to 0°F.

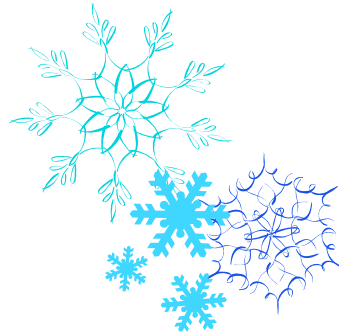
Refrigeration is just one step in safe food handling. Remember these other rules for safe food handling:

Wash hands regularly

Avoid cross-contamination of raw to ready-to-eat foods

Cook foods to the proper safe temperature

Keep food contact surfaces clean and sanitized



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