

The 2-hour Rule

Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours after cooking—do not let food cool on the counter. Label and date cooked foods; if you don't plan on eating them within a few days, freeze them.

Divide large roasts and soups into small portions for cooling in the refrigerator.

Marinate foods in a covered container in the refrigerator, not on the counter.

THAW IN THE REFRIGERATOR!

Never thaw food at room temperature. The outer area usually reaches the temperature danger zone (between 40° and 140°) before the center thaws. Thaw meat and poultry in the refrigerator. Do not thaw them on the kitchen counter at room temperature—harmful bacteria grow very rapidly and may make you and your family sick. Set the frozen food on a plate on the bottom shelf to keep any drippings from contaminating other foods.



Keep Food Safe: Keep it Cold

Refrigerate:

Keep your refrigerator at 40°F or less because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying.

Check the temperature often with an appliance thermometer. Place the thermometer in the middle of your refrigerator. If milk spoils in a week, your refrigerator may be too warm.

How cold should they be?

Refrigerator: 40°F or colder

Freezer: 0°F or below

