



Steps to Keeping Foods Safe in your Home

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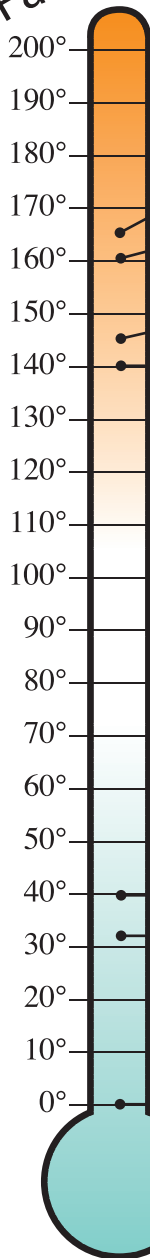
Reviewed by Renee Boyer, Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist, Food Science and Technology, Virginia Tech

Did you know that 1 in 6 Americans get sick from eating food that is not safe?

See the thermometer to find out what temperature you should cook foods to.

Follow the tips on the following page to keep your food safe and your family healthy.

Fahrenheit



165°F – Whole or ground poultry (turkey, chicken, duck, or goose), stuffing, leftovers, and casseroles

160°F – Ground beef, pork, veal, and lamb and meat mixtures, and egg dishes

145°F – Fresh beef, pork, veal, and lamb (steaks, roasts, chops) hold for three minutes once removed from cooking source.

140°F – Hold hot foods above (Ex. Reheated or pre-cooked ham)

The Danger Zone 40° – 140°F

- Foods held between 40° – 140°F can grow lots of bacteria and make you sick.
- Keep foods in your refrigerator at less than 40°F.
- Keep foods in your freezer at 0°F.

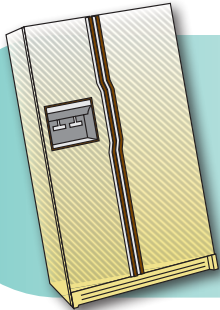
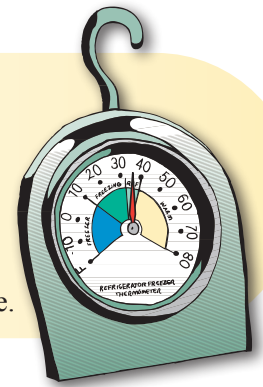
32° – 40°F – Refrigerator temperature

0°F – Freezer temperature

Sources: <http://www.fightbac.org/> <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines>

Use your COOL tool

- Keep your food out of the *Danger Zone* 40° – 140°F.
- Put a refrigerator thermometer in the refrigerator.
- If you don't have a refrigerator thermometer, you can buy one at a grocery store, hardware store, or discount store.
- Refrigerator – Make sure the temperature is always between 32° – 40°F.
- Freezer – Make sure the temperature is always at 0°F.
- Don't overstuff the refrigerator. Cold air must be able to move around to keep food safe.



Chill

- Put food in the refrigerator or freezer within 2 hours of purchase.
- Store food in refrigerator or freezer within 2 hours after preparation or cooking.
- Separate large amounts of leftovers into shallow (2-inch high) containers for quicker and safer storage.
- Throw away foods if they look damaged or rotten.

The Thaw Law

- Never defrost food at room temperature.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator.
- If you will cook food immediately, defrost in the microwave or put the food in an airtight package and then put it in cold water for a quick thaw.
- Keep your refrigerator clean.
- A clean refrigerator will get rid of things that can make you sick.
- Clean shelves and surfaces in your refrigerator with warm soapy water.



If in Doubt, Throw it Out!

- Throw out any food if you are not sure it is safe anymore.
- Throw out leftovers within 3 to 4 days.

Pregnant women, young children, older adults, and people who are already sick need to pay extra attention to food safety.

Avoid:

- soft cheese made from unpasteurized milk
- raw unpasteurized milk or juices
- lunch meat
- hot dogs
- meat spreads from the refrigerated section of the grocery store
- raw sprouts
- undercooked meat, poultry, eggs and seafood

For tips visit us at:



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The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is an equal opportunity provider and employer. This material is funded by USDA's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - SNAP which provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more, contact your county or city Department of Social Services or to locate your county office call toll-free: 1-800-552-3431 (M-F 8:15-5:00, except holidays). By calling your local DSS office, you can get other useful information about services.

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