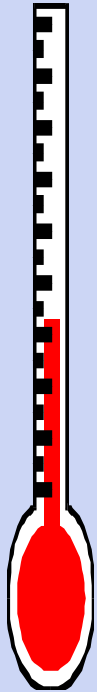


## Keep food safe



**Reheat rapidly to 60°C or hotter**

**Cool food rapidly to 5°C or colder**

### Remember

- **Prepare food quickly**
- **Cook food thoroughly**
- **Cool and reheat food rapidly**
- **Store, display and transport food either chilled or hot**

## Food poisoning

Food poisoning, with its symptoms of vomiting, diarrhoea and stomach cramps, is a very unpleasant illness from which most of us will recover. However, for some people, including young children and the frail elderly, it can be life threatening or can leave sufferers with serious health problems.

One cause of food poisoning is bacteria that have had the opportunity to multiply in food.

Bacteria that have the chance to multiply in food cause food poisoning in two ways. They either multiply in foods to sufficient numbers to make us ill or, as they multiply, they produce poisons in the food that cause illness.

Keeping food at the right temperature will prevent food poisoning bacteria that might be in the food from multiplying.



**Food Standards Australia New Zealand developed this leaflet for State and Territory governments.**

**Food Standards Australia New Zealand website is at [www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)**

**For food safety fact sheets and information on your food safety obligations contact your local government council**

**Council contact details**



## Essential food safety practices

## Cool and reheat food safely—to the right temperatures

**For food safety fact sheets and information on your food safety obligations contact your local government council**

## Which types of food must be cooled and reheated safely?

The types of food that must be cooled and reheated safely are called potentially hazardous food.

### Examples of potentially hazardous food that are likely to be cooled and reheated

- \* Cooked meat or cooked food containing meat, such as casseroles, curries and lasagne
- \* Cooked food containing smallgoods (e.g. strasbourg, ham and chicken loaf), such as pizza topping
- \* Dairy products, such as milk and custard
- \* Sauces containing cream or milk
- \* Seafood including patties, fish balls, stews and sauces containing seafood and fish stock
- \* Cooked rice and pasta
- \* Foods containing eggs, beans, nuts or other protein rich foods such as quiche, soy bean products and lentil burgers



This list may not include every type of food. If you are doubtful about a particular food the Environmental Health Officer at your local council will be able to assist.

### You must have a thermometer to check the temperature of the food

If you handle potentially hazardous food you must have a probe thermometer accurate to  $\pm 1^{\circ}\text{C}$  to check the temperature of your food.

Remember to clean and sanitise the thermometer before you insert it into food. A fact sheet on thermometers is available from your local council.

## Cooling food safely

### What is the problem?

Food poisoning bacteria that may have survived the cooking process will start to multiply as hot food cools down.

Once the food has dropped in temperature to  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$  or below bacteria will multiply. Their numbers will increase as the food cools to  $5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The longer the food takes to cool the greater the number of bacteria in the food.

### How can I prevent food poisoning bacteria from multiplying?

Cool the food as quickly as possible. The Food Safety Standards require you to cool potentially hazardous food in the following times

From  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $21^{\circ}\text{C}$  in a maximum of 2 hours  
and from  $21^{\circ}\text{C}$  to  $5^{\circ}\text{C}$  in a maximum of 4 hours

### What are some ways I can cool food rapidly?

- \* Place food to cool in the refrigerator or cool-room as soon as it stops steaming
- \* Portion food before cooling for example, slice meats and cut large poultry into smaller portions
- \* Place liquid foods such as stews and casseroles in shallow containers no more than 5 cm deep
- \* Ensure cool air can circulate round the food – so place food containers on shelves, not on the floor.

## Reheating food safely

### What is the problem?

Food poisoning bacteria will start to multiply when chilled food is reheated to temperatures above  $5^{\circ}\text{C}$ . They will stop multiplying when the food reaches  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$ . The longer it takes for food to reheat to  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$  the greater the number of bacteria that may be in the food.

### How can I prevent food poisoning bacteria from multiplying?

Reheat food rapidly. The recommended maximum time to reheat food is 2 hours.

The Food Safety Standards require you to reheat potentially hazardous food that you are going to hold hot e.g. in a bain-marie, rapidly to  $60^{\circ}\text{C}$  or hotter and display or store it at that temperature or hotter.

The Food Safety Standards do not specify a temperature for reheating food to serve immediately e.g. a portion of lasagne. It is good practice to reheat all food rapidly to at least  $70^{\circ}\text{C}$  and hold it at that temperature or hotter for at least 2 minutes.

### Do I have to cool or reheat food in the times in the Food Safety Standards?

You are allowed to take longer to cool food and to different temperatures but only if you can prove that the cooling process will not make the food unsafe to eat.

If you want to reheat food slowly or to a lower temperature you will have to prove that the reheating process will not make the food unsafe to eat.