

COOL TIPS FOR KEEPING COLD FOOD COLD!

DID YOU KNOW . . .

that at room temperature, harmful bacteria in food can *double* every 20 minutes? And the more bacteria there are, the greater the chance you could become sick. So, it's important to refrigerate food quickly because cold temperatures keep most harmful bacteria from multiplying.

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Here are some helpful tips for keeping cold food *cold*:

Make sure the temperature in the refrigerator is 40 °F or below and 0 °F or below in the freezer. Use a refrigerator/freezer thermometer to check the temperature.



- Don't overfill the refrigerator. Cool air must circulate to help keep food safe.
- Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food, and leftovers within 2 hours of purchase or preparation, or within 1 hour if the temperature is above 90 °F.
- Thaw food in the refrigerator. For quick thawing, submerge in cold water in airtight packaging or thaw in the microwave, and cook the food immediately.
- Divide large quantities of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.
- Marinate food in the refrigerator.
- When transporting food, place cold food in a cooler with a cold source such as ice or commercial freezing gels. Keep the cooler in the coolest part of your car, rather than in a hot trunk.

Just the Facts, Ma'am

Here are some common myths about refrigeration and defrosting, along with *just the facts*!



Myth: Refrigeration stops bacterial growth.

Fact: Not so. Refrigeration slows, but does not prevent the growth of harmful bacteria. So always remember to refrigerate food quickly!

Myth: I can safely thaw food on my kitchen counter at room temperature.

Fact: Remember, bacteria grow rapidly at room temperature. You should avoid keeping food in the Danger Zone—the unsafe temperatures between 40 and 140 °F. To keep your food safe, always follow the Thaw Law: Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator. For quick defrosting, thaw food in airtight packaging submerged in cold water or thaw in the microwave, and cook the food immediately.