

Safe method:

Keeping food cold

It is very important to keep certain foods cold because harmful bacteria can grow in them if they are not chilled properly. It is also important to take care when freezing or defrosting food.



Safety point

Certain foods need to be kept in the fridge to keep them safe e.g.

- food with a 'use by' date
- food that says 'keep refrigerated' on the label
- cooked food e.g. food you have cooked in advance or leftovers
- ready-to-eat food such as sandwiches, salads and some desserts

Put food that you buy frozen e.g. ice cream, in the freezer straight away unless you are going to use it immediately.

Why?

If these types of food are not kept cold enough, harmful bacteria could grow.



How do you do this?

Do you put these types of food into the fridge (or freezer) straight away:

- when you return with shopping or when food is delivered?
- when a parent/guardian brings food?
- after you have used it?
- after you have cooked and cooled down food?

If not, what do you do?

Make sure that you do not use food after its 'use by' date.

Food that has passed its 'use by' date might not be safe to eat.

It is a good idea to check 'use by' dates every day.

Make sure your fridge is set at 5°C or below and your freezer is working properly.

Setting your fridge at 5°C will make sure the food is kept at 8°C or below. This is a legal requirement in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

You can check this using a fridge thermometer. Some fridges will have a digital display to show what temperature they are set at but you should check regularly that the temperature shown on the display is accurate, using a fridge thermometer.

You should check the temperature of your fridge every day. You only need to write it down if something goes wrong.

If you take food (e.g. sandwiches or yoghurts) with you when you go out, it is a good idea to use a cool bag and ice blocks to keep the food cold until you are ready to eat it.

It is important to keep chilled food cold to prevent harmful bacteria from growing.

Do you do this? Yes No

If you cook food that will not be eaten immediately (or have leftovers), cool it down, ideally within one to two hours, and then put it in the fridge or freezer.

Harmful bacteria can grow in food that is not cooled down as quickly as possible and then put in the fridge or freezer.

Use up any leftovers within 48 hours.

You can make food cool down more quickly by dividing food into smaller portions.



Safety point	Why?	How do you do this?
<p>Defrosting Food should be thoroughly defrosted before cooking (unless the manufacturer's instructions tell you to cook from frozen). If the manufacturer gives instructions on how to defrost the food, follow these.</p>	<p>If food is still frozen or partially frozen, it will take longer to cook. The outside of the food could be cooked, but the centre might not be, which means it could contain harmful bacteria.</p>	<p>Do you check food is thoroughly defrosted before cooking? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If not, what do you do? <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 40px; width: 100%;"></div></p>
<p>Ideally, defrost small amounts of food in the fridge. (Try to plan ahead and allow enough time for foods to defrost in this way.)</p>	<p>Putting food in the fridge will keep it at a safe temperature while it is defrosting.</p>	<p>Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>You could also defrost food in the microwave on the 'defrost' setting as long as the food is going to be cooked straight away.</p>	<p>This is a fast way to defrost food.</p>	<p>Do you use this method? Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Only defrost foods at room temperature if they do not need to be kept in the fridge e.g. bread.</p>	<p>Foods will defrost quite quickly at room temperature but harmful bacteria could grow in some food if it gets too warm while defrosting.</p>	<p>Do you do this? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>

Think twice!

Once food has been defrosted keep it in the fridge and use it within 24 hours. Do not freeze the food again.

What to do if things go wrong

- If you notice food has passed its 'use by' date, throw it away.

If your fridge is not working properly, you should:

- Move food that needs to be kept cold to another fridge (if you have one) or a cold area, or put it in a cool bag containing an ice block. If you cannot do this use the food straight away, or if you do not know how long the fridge has been broken down, throw the food away.
- If food that should be kept cold, has been left out of the fridge for a long time and is no longer cold, you should throw it away.

If you find that your freezer is not working properly, you should do the following things:

- **If food is still frozen** (i.e. hard and icy) it should be moved to another freezer straight away, if you have one. If you do not have another freezer, defrost the food safely and use within 24 hours.
- **If food has begun to defrost** you should continue to defrost it safely.
- **If food has fully defrosted** (i.e. it is soft and warm), throw the food away.
- **If food that needs to be kept frozen** (e.g. ice cream) has started to defrost, do not refreeze it. Use it immediately or throw it away.

 **Write down what went wrong and what you did about it on your action sheet.** 

Safe method completed: Date: _____ Signature: _____