



Nut Ed
by email

Food Safety

It can be easy to forget that food can potentially be dangerous if not handled, stored and prepared correctly. Additionally, unnecessary expense occurs with the waste of foods when they are not stored or handled appropriately. National food safety standards specify that potentially hazardous foods must be stored, displayed and transported at a safe temperature. Potentially hazardous foods are foods that might contain food poisoning bacteria and are capable of supporting the growth of these bacteria to levels which are unsafe for consumption. The following are some examples:

- raw and cooked meat or foods containing meat, such as casseroles, curries, lasagne etc
- dairy products, for example, milk, custard and dairy based desserts
- seafood (excluding live seafood)
- processed fruits and vegetables, for example, salads
- cooked rice and pasta
- foods containing eggs, beans, nuts or other protein rich foods, such as quiche and soy products
- foods that contain any of the above foods, such as sandwiches

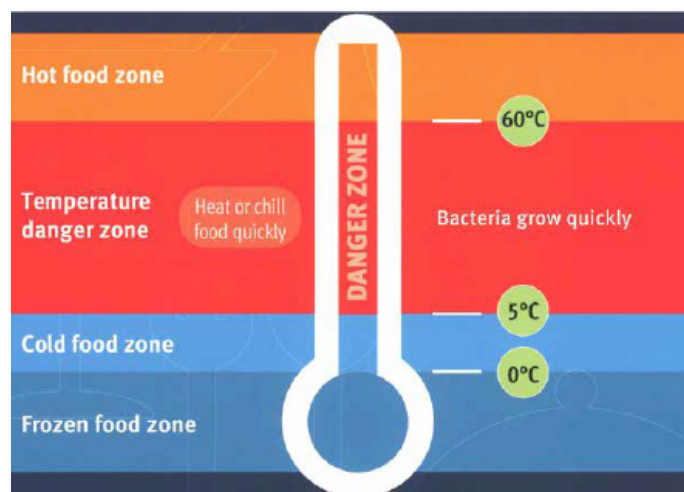
Bacteria will not grow in certain foods so these are not classified as 'potentially hazardous'. Some examples include canned and bottled food, dried fruit, salted dried meats, fermented dried meats, yoghurts, hard cheeses, spreads, some sauces, dried pasta, breads and dried foods. It is important to remember that a food that isn't potentially hazardous can become hazardous if altered - for example, dry custard powder is not potentially hazardous but when mixed with milk or water to make custard, the custard becomes potentially hazardous.

What is a Safe Temperature?

Safe temperatures for food are 5°C or colder, or 60°C or hotter. In between these two temperatures is what we call the 'danger zone'. This is because between 5°C and 60°C degrees, bacteria potentially present in the food rapidly grows and multiplies. For this reason, any potentially hazardous foods need to be kept outside of this danger zone to avoid food poisoning.

Temperature Tips for Cold Foods:

- Ensure your fridge is cold enough so food is kept at below 5°C
- Put any food that needs to be kept cold in the fridge straight away
- Don't eat perishable food if it's been left out of the fridge for 4 hours or more
- Defrost and marinate foods in the fridge, especially meats
- Use an esky or cooler bag if a fridge is not available
- Cooked foods need to be cooled from 60°C to 21°C within 2 hours and be reduced to 5°C within 4 hours





Food Safety continued...

Temperature Tips for Hot Foods

- Cook foods to an internal temperature of at least 75°C
- If you are holding the food hot (e.g. buffet) it should be at 60°C or above
- Reheat food to above 60°C, until it is steaming hot
- When using a thermometer, insert it into the centre of cooked/cooking meat
- If you do not have a thermometer, ensure there is no pink flesh evident in cooked meats e.g. mince, sausages or chicken. Ensure juices are clear
- Heat all marinades containing raw meat juices to boiling before serving

For more information about food safety, refer to pages 44-46 of the Country Kitchens Healthy Cooking Guidelines.

If you are interested in expanding your skills and knowledge around food safety, you can complete a free online training program, [DoFoodSafely](#). This learning program is comprised of seven topics and includes an assessment quiz and certificate of completion.