

Cooling Potentially Hazardous Foods

Improper cooling of potentially hazardous foods is the number one cause of foodborne illness. Disease causing bacteria grow best in the "temperature danger zone" of 41° F. to 135° F. When potentially hazardous foods are improperly cooled, it provides an ideal environment for bacteria to multiply.

Potentially hazardous foods must be cooled from 135° F. to 70° F. within two hours. The food product then should be cooled from 70° F to 41° F within 4 hours. The faster foods pass through the "temperature danger zone" as they are cooled, the better.

Cooling Tips

- ✚ Never allow food to set on the countertop (room temperature) to cool.
- ✚ Refrigerate or chill the food in an ice bath immediately upon removal from the heat source.
- ✚ Use the right type of storage container to chill foods:
 - Divide foods into smaller portions and put into shallow containers.
 - Metal containers chill foods fastest.
 - Glass and plastic containers take longer to cool foods.
- ✚ Allow for air circulation because loosely covered or uncovered foods chill faster. Rapidly chill the food, then cover tightly.
- ✚ Where possible, substitute ice for water in a recipe. Add the ice at the end of the cooking process to cool the product rapidly.
- ✚ Set containers of food in ice baths and stir frequently.
- ✚ Use blast chillers when possible.