



LEFTOVERS

If you've cooked too much food, quickly cool food and store leftovers at 41°F or below. When food sits out at room temperature, bacteria that causes illness can grow rapidly. Some foods--such as those containing animal products, cut melons and tomatoes, leafy greens, cooked vegetables and grains--should be tossed after 4 hours at 41°F or above OR after 1 hour outside in 90°F or above. Follow these guidelines for handling leftovers safely to reduce of making you sick.

HANDLING AND STORING LEFTOVERS

- Throw away or compost any perishable food left at 41°F or above for more than 4 hours. This food is more likely to make you sick.
- Cool leftovers quickly
 - Place foods like soups, stews or dips in shallow containers before refrigerating as they allow for quicker cooling
- Seal leftovers in storage containers or wrap leftovers in airtight packaging to prevent cross-contamination with other foods in your refrigerator and to maintain the quality of the food
- Refrigerate (41°F or below) perishable leftovers as soon as the meal is over and eat leftovers within 7 days

THAWING FROZEN LEFTOVERS

- **Consider one of these four ways to thaw frozen leftovers safely**
 - **Refrigerate:** Food should be at 41°F or below
 - **Cool water:** Submerge packaged food in running water, 70°F or below. If water cannot stay running, change water in sink or container every 30 minutes
 - **Microwave:** Cook food immediately after
 - **Part of the cooking process:** Allow at least 50% longer time to cook through

PROTECT LEFTOVERS FROM POTENTIAL CONTAMINATION

REHEATING LEFTOVERS

- Use a digital, tip-sensitive thermometer to check the final temperature when reheating leftovers
 - Oven or Stovetop: Cook food to 165°F for minimum of 15 seconds
 - Microwave: Cook food to 165°F for minimum of 2 minutes within 2 hours
 - Cook, stir and/or rotate food for even cooking
- **Only reheat food once, discard uneaten portions of reheated food**
- Do not use hot holding equipment like slow cookers to reheat food