



## Keep Your Refrigerator Cool

According to the United States Food and Drug Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service, refrigeration at 40 degrees F or below is one of the most effective ways to reduce the risk of foodborne illness. The best way to make sure your refrigerator is maintaining the recommended temperature of 40 degrees F or below is to check it with a refrigerator thermometer.

### Cool Refrigeration Tips

- Use a refrigerator thermometer to check that the refrigerator is at 35 to 40°F and the freezer at 0°F or below. The temperature of the food in your refrigerator should be 40°F or lower.
- Place the thermometer at the center of the middle shelf (rather than the door).
- Your refrigerator cycles on and off. According to National Sanitation Foundation International (NSF) you should check the thermometer at the time your refrigerator compressor just turns on. This is when your refrigerator is at its highest temperature. If the thermometer reads above 40 degrees F, adjust the control dial according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Times when your refrigerator thermometer might read higher than 40 degrees F include:
  - initial placement of the thermometer inside the refrigerator
  - a refrigerator door opened for an extended period of time
  - hot foods recently placed in the refrigerator or
  - the refrigerator's automatic defrost cycle.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator in pans so juices don't drip onto other foods.
- Refrigerate prepared food and leftovers within two hours of cooking.
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into small, shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator. Cover when food is cooled.
- Don't pack the refrigerator. Cool air must circulate to keep food safe.

### Food Safety Hotlines

- }] USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline answer your questions by phone or via email. Phone: 1-888-MPHOTLINE (1-866-674-6854) from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (CST) weekdays, email questions [MPHotline.fsis@usda.gov](mailto:MPHotline.fsis@usda.gov); website: [www.fsis.usda.gov](http://www.fsis.usda.gov) .
- }] FDA's Food Safety Information Hotline: 1-888-SAFEFOOD (1-888-723-3366) 24 hour recording.
- }] AnswerLine - 1-800-854-1678 - Call to talk directly to an Extension home economist for answers on food safety and other household topics. Hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 – noon and 1:00 – 4:00 p.m. A service of University of Minnesota Extension and Iowa State Extension.

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