

GRAB AND GO LESSON

Keep Food Safe: Control Food Temperatures

Topic Area: Health and Safety
Subtopic Area: Food Safety

Objective: Recall three ways to control food temperatures in child care settings.

Each year, millions of people get sick from foodborne illnesses by consuming contaminated foods or beverages. Young children are at a higher risk of becoming extremely sick if they eat foods that have harmful bacteria growing in it. They have underdeveloped immune systems, and their bodies are not fully equipped to fight off illnesses. One way to reduce the risk of foodborne illnesses is to control food temperatures when storing, preparing, and serving foods.

Food Storing

When storing foods, it's important to control food temperatures using a thermometer. Place a dry storage thermometer in the storeroom/pantry and an appliance thermometer in the refrigerator and freezer. Post it in a place where you can easily read the temperatures. It is also a good practice to maintain storage area temperatures based on the following standards.

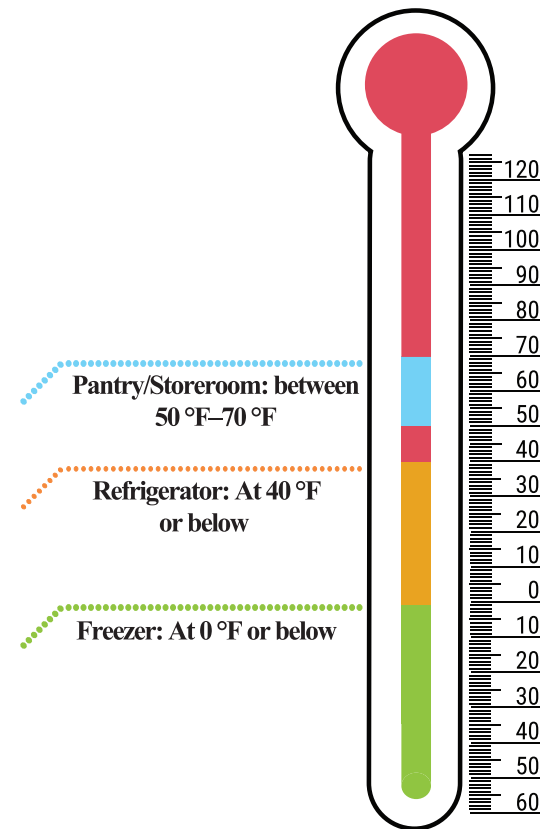
- Pantry/Storeroom: between 50 °F–70 °F
- Refrigerator: At 40 °F or below.
- Freezer: At 0 °F or below.

Using a temperature log, record temperatures and the time it was taken at the beginning and end of the day. Remember, when storing any foods always label and date the items so you know how long the items have been stored.

Food Preparation

Plan your food preparation so food is at room temperature for a short time before it is refrigerated, prepared, or served.

- Avoid the Temperature Danger Zone (40 °F–140 °F): Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold.
- Use a Thermometer: Use a dial thermometer or digital thermometer to test the internal temperature of foods.
- Thaw foods properly:
 - o In the refrigerator, maintain the food temperature at 40 °F or below.
 - o Completely submerged under cold, running water.
 - o In the microwave and cook immediately after thawing.
 - o As part of the cooking process, such as frozen chicken nuggets put on a pan and placed in the oven.
- Cooking foods to the correct internal temperature:
 - o 140 °F: Ready-to-eat foods taken from a commercially processed, airtight, sealed package; vegetables and fruits (frozen or canned); pre-cooked ham (to reheat)
 - o 145 °F: Fresh beef, veal, lamb, or pork roast
 - o 160 °F: Ground meat (including ground beef and sausage), egg dishes
 - o 165 °F: Poultry (ground or whole, turkey, chicken), casseroles, leftovers



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Food Service

- Perishable food, including leftovers, left in the temperature danger zone (40 °F–140 °F) for more than 4 hours can cause illness.
- Throw away any food left at room temperature for more than 2 hours. If the temperature is 90 °F or higher, throw away food after 1 hour.
- Storing Leftovers
 - o Refrigerate or freeze leftover food within 2 hours in clean, shallow, covered containers.
 - o Serve leftovers as soon as possible, up to four days in the refrigerator after preparation.
 - o Cooked leftovers must be reheated until the internal temperature is 165 °F for at least 15 seconds.
 - o Bring gravies and sauces to a rolling boil.
 - o After a leftover food has been reheated and served, throw away any food not eaten the second time.
 - o When in doubt, throw it out.

From prepping to storing to reheating food, keeping your food at a safe temperature is an effective way to protect children and staff from getting a foodborne illness. Remember to check with your sponsor or regulatory agency for the current food safety guidance that you must follow. For additional information, refer to the *Food Safety in Child Care* course at theicn.org.

References:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2013). *Freezing and food safety*. Retrieved from https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/freezing-and-food-safety/CT_Index.
- U.S. Department of Agriculture. (2013). *Kitchen companion: Your safe food handbook*. Retrieved from <https://www.fsis.usda.gov>.

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