

THE 4Cs OF SUMMER FOOD SAFETY

The key actions to remember this summer fit into four easy-to-remember categories:

1 CHILLING & DEFROSTING

Chilling food properly helps stop harmful bacteria from growing, especially in the warm summer months. So, make sure you do the following things:

- Do not defrost foods at room temperature. Ideally food should be defrosted fully in the fridge or if this is not possible, using a microwave on the defrost setting directly before cooking.
- Cool cooked foods at room temperature and then place in the fridge within one to two hours.
- Store raw foods separately from ready-to-eat foods and place them covered on the bottom shelf of your fridge.
- Keep chilled food out of the fridge for the shortest time possible during preparation.
- Any food with a 'use by' date, pre-cooked dishes, salads and desserts all need to be kept chilled and out of the sun until serving time.
- At barbecues and picnics, cold perishable food should be kept in the fridge or a cool box until serving time.
- Check regularly that your fridge is cold enough - it should be below 5°C.



Some foods need to be kept in the fridge to help slow down germs' growth and keep food fresh and safe for longer.

Generally, the colder the temperature the slower germs will grow, but cold temperatures don't stop germs growing altogether. Consider using a fridge thermometer to check the temperature is below 5°C as your fridge's dials are not usually an indication of the temperature.



2 COOKING

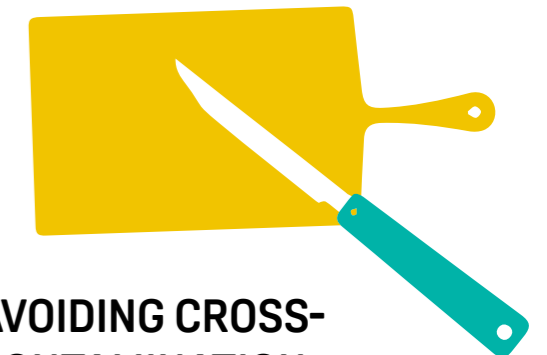
Cooking food at the right temperature and for the correct length of time will ensure that any harmful bacteria are killed. This is particularly important when cooking minced meat products such as beef burgers, sausages and kebabs as well as pork, turkey and chicken:

- Always check that:
 - The meat is steaming hot throughout.
 - There is no pink meat visible when you cut into the thickest part.
 - Meat juices run clear.
- Burgers prepared at home should always be cooked all the way through until steaming hot. They should not be served rare or pink because harmful bacteria may be present in the middle of the burger, causing food poisoning.
- Once served, dishes should not sit out for longer than two hours, or one hour if it's very hot outside.

3 CLEANING

Effective cleaning removes bacteria on hands, equipment and surfaces, helping to stop harmful bacteria from spreading onto food. These three tips will help keep germs at bay:

- **Hands:** Wash hands before cooking and eating where possible. If you're at a picnic and it's not possible to wash your hands, use a wet wipe to clean your hands, then use a sanitiser on top to sterilise them.
- **Utensils and serving dishes:** Take care to keep all utensils and platters clean when preparing food and ensure you don't mix those used to prepare raw and ready-to-eat dishes.
- **Cook it, don't wash it:** Don't wash raw chicken or any other meat; it just splashes germs onto your hands, clothes, utensils and worktops. Thorough cooking will kill any bacteria present.



4 AVOIDING CROSS-CONTAMINATION

Cross-contamination is most likely to happen when raw food touches (or drips onto) ready-to-eat food, utensils or surfaces. Prevent it by following these tips:

- Store raw meat separately from ready-to-eat foods.
- Use different utensils, plates and chopping boards for raw and cooked food.
- Wash your hands after touching raw meat and before you handle ready-to-eat food.
- Do not prepare food for others if you are unwell.