



## Cooling Potentially Hazardous Food

If you cook potentially hazardous food that you intend to cool and use later, you need to cool the food to 5°C or colder as quickly as possible. There may be food poisoning bacteria present in the food even though it has been cooked. Quicker cooling times limit the time these bacteria have to multiply or grow to form toxins.

*When cooling cooked potentially hazardous foods, you must cool the food within the following timeframes:*

- *from 60°C to 21°C within two (2) hours; and*
  - *from 21°C to 5°C within a further four (4) hours.*
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- Using a probe thermometer, check that the core temperature of potentially hazardous food reduces as per the timeframes outlined above;
  - Check that the food is being cooled in a suitable clean and sanitised food container;
  - Protect cooling food from the likelihood of contamination, either physically, chemically or microbiologically;
  - Potentially hazardous food can be left at room temperature until it drops to 60°C (check with your probe thermometer), then the food should be put in the refrigerator or coolroom to continue cooling;
  - Do not put very hot food straight from the oven or stove into a refrigerator, cool room or freezer because it can cause the refrigeration temperature to rise. A good general guide, is to let it stand for 20-30 minutes (stirring frequently) at room temperature or until it stops steaming, prior to placing the food under refrigeration;
  - Ensure the internal refrigerator temperature does not rise above 5°C when cooling food;
  - Cool food in large shallow containers – this allows a larger surface area to be cooled. Do not cool in deep narrow containers or buckets.
  - Do not overload refrigerators or coolrooms;
  - Never mix batches of food;
  - Discard any food if the required cooling times and temperatures have not been reached;
  - Ensure all cooled food is reheated correctly (see **Reheating and Hot Holding** factsheet)