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## Being Food Safe with Take-Out and Delivered Foods

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### Busy Day, Parties, Holiday Easy-days, or Picnics . . .

We rely on restaurants and stores to prepare a lot of our food today, to help with the hectic schedules we keep. Delivered foods are usually eaten as soon as they arrive at the door, although there may be leftovers for another time. Take-out foods may also be picked up on the way home for dinner or eaten back at the office for lunch. Or, people buy take-out food in advance for eating at a later time that same day or even another day. When not eaten right after preparing, convenience foods need to be handled carefully to avoid foodborne illness.



#### TWO-HOUR RULE:

**Discard all perishable foods left at room temperature for more than 2 hours total time.**  
**Discard after 1 hour if the air temperature is above 90°F.**

### Hot Take-Out or Delivered Food

- Once food is cooked, it should be held at a food temperature of 140°F or above.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure the food has an internal temperature of at least 140°F in the thickest part or center of soups, sauces, and other liquids.
- Keeping food just "warm" between 40 and 140°F is not safe.
- Stove tops, preheated ovens, chafing dishes, preheated warming trays or slow cookers may be used to keep hot foods hot.



## **Cold/Refrigerated Take-Out or Delivered Food**



- Cold foods should be kept at 40°F or below.
- Refrigerate perishable foods as soon as possible, always within 2 hours after purchase or cold delivery. If the food is in air temperatures above 90°F, refrigerate within 1 hour.
- For family or individual meals, take out your serving and refrigerate the leftovers immediately.
- For larger events, keep cold foods cold for serving, such as on a buffet table, by nesting serving dishes in larger bowls of ice. Use small platters and replace them with fresh refrigerated platters of food often. Do not add new food from the refrigerator to a serving dish already on the table.
- Use coolers with plenty of ice or frozen gel packs to carry take-out food to an outdoor event or one that is a long distance away.
- Remember that food removed from the coolers must follow the 2-hour rule.

## **Leftover Take-Out or Delivered Food**



- Leftovers should be refrigerated or frozen right away. Follow the 2-hour rule for discarding.
- Whole roasts, hams and turkeys should be sliced or cut into smaller pieces before storing. Refrigerate or freeze other leftovers in small, shallow containers for quick cooling.
- Wrap or cover foods to preserve quality and prevent contamination.
- Salads made with mayonnaise do not freeze well; refrigerate and use within 3-5 days.
- Pre-cooked food with meat or poultry thawed in the refrigerator should be eaten within 3 to 4 days.
- Thaw wrapped foods on a tray in the refrigerator. If you are reheating the food, you can also thaw in the microwave. Be sure to do it when you can finish reheating the food all the way to 165°F whether in the microwave oven or another appliance. Frozen foods to be reheated can also be put directly into the oven without thawing.
- Solid leftovers should be reheated to 165°F. Reheat sauces, soups, and gravies to a rolling boil.
- When reheating in an oven, never use an oven temperature less than 325°F.
- When reheating in a microwave, be sure to cover the food but loosen a corner or vent the container to allow steam to escape. Rotate or stir food midway through cooking to eliminate cold spots where bacteria can survive. Allow food to stand two minutes reheating to let heat distribute evenly throughout the food. (If your oven manufacturer recommends a different standing time, use that time.)
- Check the temperature of reheated food with an accurate food thermometer placed in the thickest part of the food (or center for pans of liquid food).

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