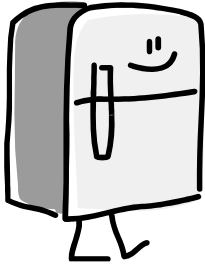


Guidelines for Thawing Food Products

Thawing or defrosting foods is a critical control point to prevent foodborne illness. Take care to avoid cross contamination and minimize food time in the danger zone (40°F to 140°F).

The Best Way → In a refrigerator at 40°F



Thaw food in a refrigerator at 40°F or below. This is one of the safest ways to thaw foods.

- Be sure to use a drip pan under the food being thawed so that the drippings do not contaminate other foods.
- Thaw raw foods below ready to eat food.
- **PLAN AHEAD!** This method can take a long time; large turkeys may take 48 hours or more to thaw.

Using a microwave if immediately followed by cooking



Use a microwave to thaw foods that are to be cooked immediately following the thawing process

- Microwave thawing actually begins the cooking process and should be followed by completely cooking the food item.
- Although thawing foods by a microwave is efficient, it is not recommended for large food items.

Thaw as part of the cooking process



Frozen foods can also be thawed as part of the cooking process. Foods which work well with this method are frozen vegetables and ground meats.

- Allow more time than normal to cook and stir more often.
- Check the final internal food temperature with a thermometer to determine that potentially harmful bacteria have been killed.

Under running water at a temperature of 70°F



Another way to thaw frozen foods is under running water with pressure sufficient to flush away loose particles

- Use a clean and sanitized food sink not a hand wash sink.
- Avoid cross contamination from the water dripping off of the food or splashing onto other foods and preparation surfaces and utensils.

It is important to limit this method to no more than two hours at a recommended water temperature of 70°F or below