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*