Extreme heat – health advice
Safe food handling during extreme heat

To avoid food poisoning, it is important to follow safe food handling practices at all times, and especially during periods of extreme heat.

Food poisoning is frequently caused by bacteria in food that has been poorly stored, handled or cooked. Bacteria grow much more quickly on food when the weather is very hot and this increases the risk of food poisoning.

Refrigerating food

- Make sure your fridge is clean, uncluttered and set at 5°C or below.
- Keep raw meat and poultry separate from other foods in the fridge, in a sealed container/bag and on the shelf to avoid drips onto other food.
- Keep the time that perishable food is out of the fridge (on the table, at a picnic, BBQ or the beach) to less than two hours on very hot days. Discard any food left after this time.
- Prepare food near to the time it is going to be served.
- Defrost foods in the fridge, or alternatively in the microwave oven, not on the kitchen bench.
- Do not refreeze any food after defrosting. Food should be cooked or thrown out if not used on the day of defrosting.
- Put leftovers in the fridge as soon as they stop steaming. Separate large quantities into smaller portions so the food can cool faster.
- Never store leftovers of perishable foods out of the fridge, and use refrigerated leftovers within two to three days.
- Do not reheat foods more than once.
- Make sure that the fridge door is closed properly at all times and there are no items preventing it from closing fully.

Travelling with food

- Don't leave grocery shopping in a hot car and place it in the coolest part of your car when taking home.
- Have an insulated cooler bag/container in the car to put perishable, chilled and frozen foods in when going home after shopping.
- When you arrive home, immediately pack chilled and frozen products into your fridge or freezer.

For more information, visit www.dhhs.tas.gov.au/publichealth/healthy_communities/extreme_heat

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