

## GUIDELINES FOR THAWING FOODS

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<b>Introduction</b>	Thawing foods is an important control in food safety. Key issues in proper thawing include avoiding cross contamination and minimizing time in the Temperature Danger Zone (between 41 °F and 135 °F).
<b>Proper Thawing Methods</b>	Thawing foods properly can be done in any of these four ways: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In a refrigerator at 41 °F or below,</li><li>2. Use a microwave,</li><li>3. As part of the cooking process, or</li><li>4. Under running water.</li></ol>
<b>In a Refrigerator At 41 Degrees F</b>	Thaw food in a refrigerator at 41 °F or below. This is one of the safest methods to thaw foods. However, note these key points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Use a drip pan under the food that is being thawed so that the drippings are contained and do not contaminate other foods.</li><li>• Thaw raw foods below ready-to-eat foods.</li><li>• Plan ahead. This method can take longer for frozen foods; turkey and other denser food items may take 24 hours or more.</li></ul>
<b>Using a Microwave</b>	Use a microwave to thaw foods that are to be cooked immediately following the thawing process. Microwave thawing actually begins the cooking process and must be followed by cooking the food item.
<b>As Part of the Cooking Process</b>	Frozen foods can also be thawed as part of the cooking process. Some helpful points to remember are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Allow more cooking time than normal and stir the food more often, if stirring is an option. Since cooking will take longer than it might normally take, check the product temperature with a thermometer frequently to ensure the safety and quality of the food item.</li><li>• Check the final internal food temperature with a thermometer to determine that potentially harmful bacteria have been killed.</li></ul>
<b>Under Running Water</b>	Another way to thaw frozen foods is under running water with water pressure sufficient to flush away loose particles. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is important to limit this method to no more than four hours at a recommended water temperature of 70 °F or below.</li><li>• A clean and sanitized food sink separate from hand wash sinks is needed.</li><li>• Avoid cross contamination from the water dripping off the food or splashing onto other foods and preparation surfaces and utensils.</li></ul>

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