

How to Thaw Food Safely

NEVER thaw **potentially hazardous food** at room temperature. As the food thaws, though the inside of the food is still frozen, the outside of the food will be in the danger zone (4°C to 60°C) for too long. This will allow any bacteria that is present to grow and multiply quickly, which can cause foodborne illness.



Method 1: Refrigerator

Thaw food in its original wrapper **IN THE REFRIGERATOR**.

- Keep the temperature at 4°C(39°F) or colder.
- Always thaw meat/poultry on the lower shelves so it doesn't drip onto other foods. Drippings may have bacteria that could spoil other foods.
- General rule of thumb for thawing time is to allow 10 hours per kilogram (5 hours per pound).



Method 2: Under Cold Running Water

Thaw food **under cold running water** or in an ice-bath at 4°C(39°F) or colder.

- Keep the water temperature at 4°C(39°F) or colder.
- Keep a constant flow of cold running water.
- Change ice often to ensure temperature is 4°C(39°F) or colder.
- Keep the food in its original wrapper.
- Keep the water level above the food, covering the entire surface.
- Allow 2 hours per kilogram (1 hour per pound).



Method 3: Microwave

Start the thawing process **IN THE REFRIGERATOR**.

- If the meat/poultry is still partially frozen, thaw it in your **MICROWAVE**, following the manufacturers' directions.
- Once meat/poultry is thawed it must be cooked immediately.



Method 4: Part of the Cooking Process

This method works well for small portions of food like seafood, ground beef and similar foods, but not with large items.

For more information, please contact your Public Health Inspector at Southwestern Public Health.