

# Heat wave: Safe food handling during extreme heat

It is important to follow safe food handling practices at all times and especially during periods of extreme heat to avoid suffering from an illness related to unsafe food.

Food poisoning is frequently caused by bacteria from food that has been poorly stored, handled or cooked. Bacteria can grow much more quickly on food that is left out of temperature control when the weather is 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 lowest 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 2 hours. Discard any food left after this time.
- Prepare food near to the time it is going to be served.
- Defrost foods in the fridge, not on the kitchen bench.
- Do not refreeze any food after defrosting; food should be cooked or thrown out if not used 1 or 2 days after defrosting.
- Put leftovers in the fridge as soon as they stop steaming.
- Never store leftovers of perishable foods out of the fridge, and use refrigerated leftovers within 2 or 3 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

- Do not leave food shopping in a hot car. Place food in the coolest part of your car when taking it home.



- Have an insulated cooler bag/container in the car to put perishable, chilled and frozen foods in when going home after shopping, or taking anywhere.
- When you arrive home, immediately pack chilled and frozen products into your fridge or freezer.

Further information on how to cope and stay healthy in times of extreme heat can be found on our website [www.public.health.wa.gov.au](http://www.public.health.wa.gov.au)

