

Chilled Storage and Cooling

Fact Sheet and Hygiene Rating Improver

No. 3



It is important to properly chill food as otherwise harmful bacteria can grow.

Some foods must be refrigerated

These include:

- Any food with a 'use by' date
- If the label says 'keep refrigerated'
- Any food which has been pre cooked but is not being eaten straight away.
- Ready to eat foods (foods that don't need to be cooked) such as sandwiches, desserts and salads.
- Some items can be stored at room temperature before opening, but once opened, they must be refrigerated, e.g. mayonnaise and ketchup.

For more detailed information on specific foodstuffs contact your environmental health officer environmentalhealth@runnymede.gov.uk or see the Industry Guide to Good Hygiene Practice: Catering Guide, Published by the Department of Health

Temperatures

- The **legal requirement** is that chilled food is kept at **8°C or below**.
- The **recommendation** is to keep the fridge or display unit at 5°C or below to ensure the food is maintained **at 5°C or below**.
- Checking the temperatures of the chillers and display units should form part of your daily opening checks.
- When preparing food, keep it out of the fridge for the shortest time possible.
- If you're having a buffet, keep the food refrigerated until you're ready to serve it.
- **Exceptions:** a chilled food can be left out for a one off period of 4 hours, after which time it should be either returned to the refrigerator or disposed of. It cannot be brought out the next day for another period out of temperature control.

Storage

Never put open cans in the fridge as the metal of the can may transfer to the can's contents. Transfer the contents into a storage container or covered bowl. Store raw meat and poultry in clean, sealed containers in a separate fridge. If this is not possible store raw meat and poultry on the bottom shelf of the fridge, so they can't touch or drip onto other food.

Cool Foods Rapidly

Ensure that foods are cooled as quickly as possible (ideally within 90 minutes) and then refrigerated. The way you choose to cool food should be the quickest method possible. Ways to reduce the cooling time include;

- Cook small portions e.g. maximum 2.5kg for meat joints
- Portion into smaller amounts once cooked, e.g. transfer sauces such as bolognaise to smaller shallower containers

- Use a tray of ice or cold water (ice bath) underneath the tray of food to be cooled, e.g. for foods such as lasagne or soups and sauces
- Place a metal tray in the freezer to use as a cooling plate for the product to be cooled.

A blast chiller is recommended if large amounts of meals are cooled. The time taken to cool foods should be recorded in the SFBB pack – Extra Checks, or in your own HACCP document.

Choose your Cooling Location

You should ensure that whilst foods are cooling they are not exposed to any risks of contamination;

- Physical contamination, for example, from flaky material above where cooling is taking place, or from bits falling into food from passersby, from insects, if located near unscreened windows or underneath fly killers.
- Bacterial contamination, for example, this could be from splashes from the hand wash basin or cooling food too close to where raw meat preparation is taking place.
- It is recommended that food is lightly covered whilst cooling.

Food Safety Management

Ensure that the chilling (blue) section of the SFBB pack has been fully completed and is applicable to your business, also that the extra checks section of the SFBB pack has been completed. If you do not use SFBB ensure that your HACCP document contains all relevant information relating to cooling and chilled storage and that they are accompanied by the relevant monitoring documents.

Visit the **Food Standards Agency's YouTube page** for Training Videos on Chilled Storage and Cooling.

FOOD HYGIENE RATING

STEP	IMPROVE MY RATING	Done
1	All food that needs to be chilled is stored at 5°C or below.	
2	Refrigerators are monitored daily as part of the opening checks	
3	Foods are cooled as quickly as possible	
4	The time taken to cool food is checked	
5	The cooling location will not result in risk of contamination	
6	The Chilling (blue) sections of SFBB has been completed or you have covered chilling and cooling in your HACCP document	

For more food safe factsheets visit www.runnymede.gov.uk/foodhygieneimprover