# HOW TO KEEP FOOD OUT OF THE
DANGER ZONE

ALL FOOD NATURALLY CONTAINS BACTERIA BUT SOME FOOD MAY CONTAIN FOOD-POISONING BACTERIA WHICH CAN CAUSE FOODBORNE ILLNESS.

Under the right circumstances, bacteria can multiply very quickly to dangerous levels. If this occurs, the result can be food poisoning. Food poisoning is very serious for both the person affected and the business which supplied the food. One case of food poisoning can close down a business.

- When bacteria multiply, they increase in number not size. Under ideal conditions, one bacterium can multiply to 2,097,152 within seven hours.

- Food-poisoning bacteria grow best in the temperature range from 41°F to 140°F. This is called the Danger Zone. Minimize your risk of causing foodborne illness by keeping food out of the danger zone.

135° F

41° F
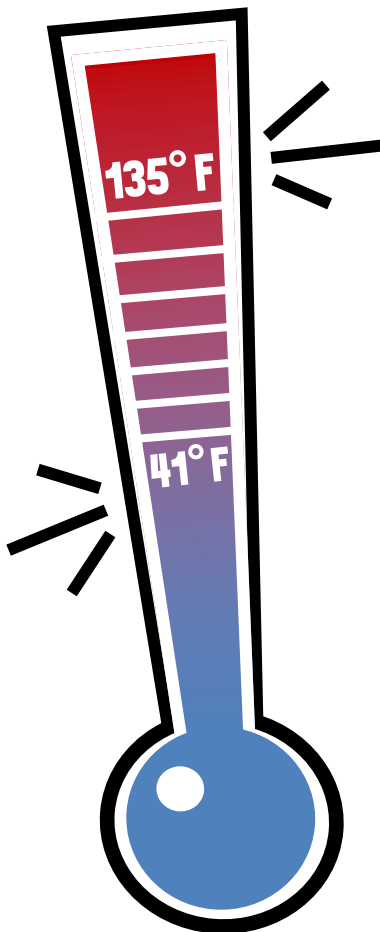
What can you do to minimize the risk of food poisoning?

- Food which has been heated and then cooled in a food facility must be reheated rapidly to a minimum temperature of 165°F prior to hot holding.

- Rapidly reheat food on a cook top or reheat to 190°F in a microwave oven. Do not heat cold food in hot-holding units because they are not designed to heat food fast enough. Food may remain in the danger zone too long and allow the rapid growth of bacteria.

- Depending on the method used to cool food which has been heated, the food may have been in the danger zone for 6 hours or more. Rapid reheating to 165°F is needed to kill bacteria which have grown in the food while the food was cooling from 140°F to 41°F.

- Food that needs to be reheated to 165°F are ones that can support the rapid growth of bacteria; i.e., potentially-hazardous foods. Some examples are soups, stews, sauces, potatoes, beans, rice and meat-containing food.

- Commercially prepared products must be heated to 140°F prior to hot holding. However, if a commercially prepared product is heated for hot holding and then cooled, the food must be reheated to 165°F.

- After reheating hold hot food at 140°F or above.

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