

Chill: refrigerate promptly. Cold temperatures inhibit the growth of illness-causing bacteria, so it's important to chill food quickly. Here are some suggestions on how to do so:

- Make sure your fridge and freezer are at the correct temperature. The fridge should be between 40°F and 32°F. The freezer should be 0°F or below.
- Do not over-stuff your fridge; to properly chill food cold air must be able to circulate.
- Remember to store leftovers in a timely fashion. If you divide leftovers into several smaller containers, the food will chill more quickly and effectively.

Never thaw or marinate foods on the counter. To thaw foods safely use one of these methods:

- Thaw in the refrigerator; this is the safest method.
- Thaw in cold running water.
- Thaw in the microwave.
- Cook without thawing. This method is safe, but it will take at least 50% longer to fully cook.

Lastly, know when it's time to throw food out. For more information on *storage times for both the refrigerator and the freezer* visit <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storagetimes.html>. Check your steps and avoid foodborne illness this holiday season. The Genesee County Health Department wishes you healthy holidays!

Genesee County Health Department. Your Health. Our Work.

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