

Check Your Temperature I.Q.

Freeze foods to below 0 degrees F to kill any harmful bacteria.

False. Although freezing may kill a few bacteria, most survive; therefore, exercise care when defrosting foods. Foods can be safely defrosted in the refrigerator, surrounded by cold water that is changed every 30 minutes, or in the microwave followed immediately by cooking. To maintain the quality of the food, keep your freezer at 0 degrees F or below.

Keep hot foods at temperatures above 140 degrees F to prevent growth of bacteria.

True. When serving hot foods at a buffet or just keeping dinner warm for a family member, it is important that the food be kept at or above 140 degrees F.

Reheat leftovers to 165 degrees F or above to ensure their safety if served hot.

True. Reheating to this temperature is another way of minimizing the risk of food poisoning.

Maintain the temperature of your refrigerator at 40 degrees F or below to prevent the growth of harmful bacteria.

True. Because *Listeria monocytogenes* -- a bacteria that can cause foodborne illness -- can grow at 41 degrees F, it is important that you keep the temperature of your refrigerator at 40 degrees F or below. This organism is especially harmful for pregnant women, because it can cause spontaneous abortions and stillbirth.

Bacterial spores and harmful toxins are destroyed by boiling (212 degrees F).

False. Bacterial spores and some toxins (for example, *staphylococcus aureus* toxin) must be heated to 240 degrees F to destroy them. Using a pressure cooker is the only way to achieve this high temperature so it is important to prevent contamination of the food. *Staphylococcus aureus* is found in our nose, infected cuts, and pimples so good handwashing is the most effective way to prevent food poisoning from this organism.

No disease causing bacteria grow below 45 degrees F.

False. *Listeria monocytogenes* grows quite well at 41 degrees F. This organism is especially harmful for pregnant women, because it causes a high rate of spontaneous abortion and stillbirth.

Food can be safely kept at room temperature for up to four hours.

False. No perishable food should be kept at room temperature for longer than 2 hours. When temperatures reach 90 to 95 degrees F, this time should be shortened to 1 hour. Under ideal conditions, bacteria can divide every 20 minutes so that in 10 to 12 hours, one bacteria has become billions!

The danger zone is a range of temperatures between 40 degrees F and 140 degrees F where bacteria multiply rapidly.

True. This temperature range spans normal room temperature, so it is critical to keep foods out of this temperature range. Under ideal conditions, bacteria can divide every 20 minutes so that in 10 to 12 hours, one bacteria has become billions!

How well did you do?

0 Wrong - a real safety pro!

1 - 3 Wrong - need to sharpen your skills.

More than 4 Wrong - is your health insurance up-to-date?