

Temperature danger zone

Temperature control is very important to prevent harmful bacteria growing in food.

The 'temperature danger zone' is between 5°C and 60°C, when it is easiest for bacteria to grow.

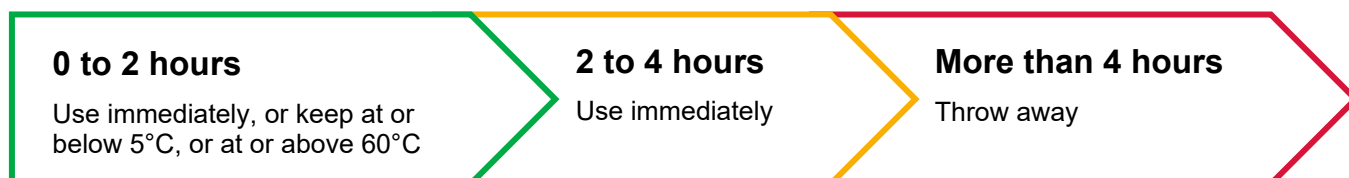
To keep food safe, you must minimise the time food spends in the temperature danger zone.

- Refrigerated food needs to be kept at 5°C or below.
- Hot food needs to be kept at 60°C or above.

The 2-hour/4-hour rule

Studies have shown food can be safely held out of temperature control for short periods without significantly increasing the risk of food poisoning.

The time food can be safely held between 5°C and 60°C is commonly referred to as the '2-hour/4-hour rule' and is applied as follows:



The time between 5°C and 60°C is cumulative, so you need to add up every time the food has been out of the fridge, including during transport, preparation and storage. If the total time is:

- less than 2 hours, the food can be used or put back in the refrigerator for later use,
- between 2 and 4 hours, the food can still be used, but can't be put back in the refrigerator, and
- 4 hours or longer, the food must be thrown out.

More information

- Visit foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- Email food.contact@dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Phone 1300 552 406

