

FOOD SAFETY FACT SHEET

2 HOUR 4 HOUR GUIDE EXPLAINED

The 2 Hour / 4 Hour guide below tells you how long freshly prepared potentially hazardous foods*, foods like cooked meat and foods containing meat, dairy products, prepared fruits and vegetables, cooked rice and pasta, and cooked or processed foods containing eggs, can be safely held at temperatures in the danger zone; that is between 5°C and 60°C. It takes time for food poisoning bacteria to grow to unsafe levels. Apply the following time limits to ensure these risky type foods remain safe to eat:

Total time between 5°C and 60°C



What you should do

OK to use or refrigerate at 5°C or less	OK to use	Throw away
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The total time includes all the time the food has been at room temperature, for example during delivery, preparation and transportation.

Example

A sandwich is freshly prepared at 12 noon and placed in a non-refrigerated display case:-

- (1) can keep the sandwich out of refrigeration for up to 2 hours (until 2p.m.) and then refrigerate and bring out again later in the day, say 4p.m. (not to go back into the refrigerator for later use after this point). If not used by 6p.m. (4 hours out of temperature control in total) then throw it away,

OR

- (2) can keep the sandwich out of temperature control (refrigeration) for up to 4 hours straight - until 4p.m. - then need to throw it away.

* Foods that are not potentially hazardous and can thus be stored out of temperature control are foods like dried fruit, salted dried meats, hard cheeses, dried pasta and other dried foods, breads, unopened canned and bottled food, spreads and sauces such as tomato and soy sauce.