Be Safe with “Planned-Over” Foods

Refrigerate Foods Safely

Be sure to include food safety in your plans for preparing food for several meals.

Whether you plan to refrigerate for a short time or freeze portions for longer storage, food safety is important!

The “DO” List:

✓ Keep refrigerator temperature 40°F or lower.
✓ Separate and refrigerate “planned-over” portions before you serve the rest of the dish after the first cooking.
✓ Refrigerate all foods in small quantities to cool quickly.
✓ Cool hot food slightly on a rack before refrigerating, for about 20 to 30 minutes only.
✓ Refrigerate in shallow containers no deeper than 2” to 3”, to allow food to cool quickly before bacteria can multiply well.
✓ Cover food to protect it from contamination.
✓ Use refrigerated “planned-overs” within 2 to 3 days; otherwise freeze.
✓ Thaw frozen “planned-overs” in the refrigerator.

Don’t

✗ Cool in deep pots or containers.
✗ Cool large roasts without slicing down.
✗ Allow perishable food to sit at room temperature more than 2 hours total, including preparation, cooling or serving.
✗ Cover food too tightly until it is completely cooled.
Freezing “Planned-Over” Foods Correctly

- Keep your freezer at 0°F.
- Use a thermometer to check the inside freezer temperature.
- Cool warm or hot foods in the refrigerator before freezing.
- Use freezer-designated wrap, bags and containers.
- Allow headspace for expansion when needed.
- Use small, flatter packages that will freeze and thaw faster.
- Remove as much air as possible from packages.
- Place in freezer so cold air can circulate around packages.
  - Then stack and arrange closer together to save space.
- Label and date foods.

Common Foods That Don’t Freeze Well

- Raw vegetables high in water content: lettuce, cucumbers, celery, cabbage, radishes, etc.
- Mayonnaise, sour cream, milks and most cream.
- Potato and pasta salads; cooked pastas.
- Gravies and thickened sauces; milk sauces.
- Custards and cream puddings; merengues.
- Fried foods and crumb toppings may become soggy.
- Cooked eggs; potato pieces.
- Gelatin.