

Understanding Five Keys to Food Safety



Advice for Food Safety at Home



The most common causes of food poisoning are undercooking, contamination of cooked food with raw food, and a lack of personal hygiene when handling food. To properly handle food and reduce the risk of foodborne diseases, everyone should follow the **“Five Keys to Food Safety”**.



The Five Keys to Food Safety include:



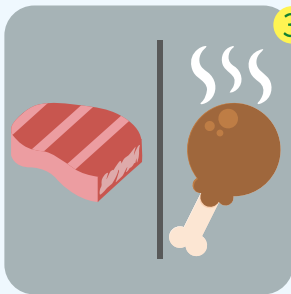
Choose

Choose safe raw materials



Clean

Keep hands and utensils clean



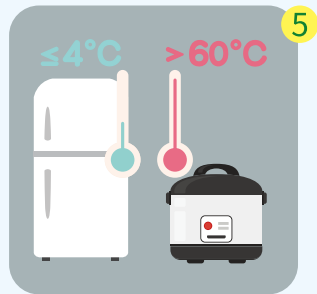
Separate

Separate raw and cooked food



Cook



Cook thoroughly



Safe Temperature

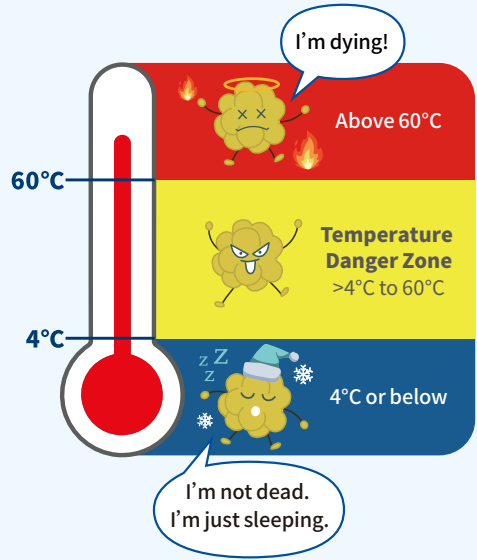
Keep food at safe temperature



Scan the QR code for watching a video on “Five Keys to Food Safety”. Click  to turn on subtitles, and click  to choose the language of the subtitles.



Storing food at the **Temperature Danger Zone** between 4°C and 60°C allows bacteria to grow rapidly. Proper temperature control at all stages of food preparation is an effective way to prevent bacterial food poisoning. While low temperature storage will inhibit growth of bacteria but cannot kill them, high temperature treatment can destroy bacteria effectively.



Now, let's see how Mui applies the Five Keys to Food Safety in the five procedures of everyday food handling.

The diagram shows five food safety steps in a sequence:

- Purchase**: Represented by a shopping cart icon.
- Storage**: Represented by a refrigerator icon.
- Preparation**: Represented by a knife and plate icon.
- Cooking**: Represented by a boiling pot icon.
- Handling leftovers**: Represented by a hand being washed under water.

At the bottom of the diagram is a cartoon girl character with a speech bubble that says "Let me show you my expertise!!"

Purchase



- 1 Buy food from hygienic and reliable licensed shops.
- 2 Check the expiry dates and nutrition labels of prepackaged food.
- 3 Avoid buying cans of food that are dented, bulging, damaged or rusted.
- 4 Choose eggs without cracks. Use pasteurised eggs for undercooked egg dishes.
- 5 Use ice packs to keep perishable foods cold.



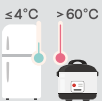
Choose

At markets and supermarkets:

- Buy food from hygienic and reliable licensed shops.
 - ▶ Do not buy food from unlicensed shops or questionable sources.
- Select fresh and wholesome food.
 - ▶ Vegetables and fruits are not damaged or bruised.
 - ▶ Dried items are not mouldy.
 - ▶ Cans of food are not dented, bulging, damaged or rusted. Jars of food are not cracked or with a loose lid.
 - ▶ Eggs are not cracked or leaking. Use pasteurised eggs for undercooked egg dishes.
- Choose ready-to-eat, cooked or perishable foods that are stored correctly, e.g. sushi should be stored at 4°C or below, frozen chicken should be stored at -18°C or below.
- Do not buy food beyond its expiry date.
- When buying food, take dried items (including food and non-food items) first and frozen and chilled products later before checking out to reduce the staying time at the Temperature Danger Zone (4°C-60°C) to minimise possible hazards.
- Read nutrition labels to help make healthier food choices.



- Pick up prepackaged and canned foods first, shop for raw meat, poultry and seafood last.
- Keep raw meat, poultry and seafood separate from other food items in your grocery cart and shopping bags to prevent their juices from contaminating other food items.
- Pack foods separately from chemical agents to prevent them from being contaminated.



Safe Temperature

- If long travelling time is expected, use ice packs to keep perishable foods cold.
- Store frozen and chilled foods in the refrigerator promptly to reduce the time they stay at ambient temperature to maintain their quality.



“Use by” and “Best before” dates

Date marks give a practical guide to how long food can be kept before it begins to deteriorate or may become unsafe to eat.

“Use by” date

A “use by” date on food is about **food safety**. The food can be eaten until the “use by” date but not after. “Use by” dates are seen on foods that go off quickly, such as meat products or ready-to-eat salads.



“Best before” date

A “best before” date is about **food quality but not safety**. The food will be safe to eat after this date but may not be at its best. Its flavour and texture might not be as good as before. “Best before” dates appear on a wide range of foods including frozen, dried and canned foods. Nonetheless, consumers should avoid eating spoiled foods.



Once the packaging of the food is opened, the date mark may **become irrelevant**. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for storage time and conditions after opening, e.g. “refrigerate after opening at or below 4°C and finish within 7 days”.

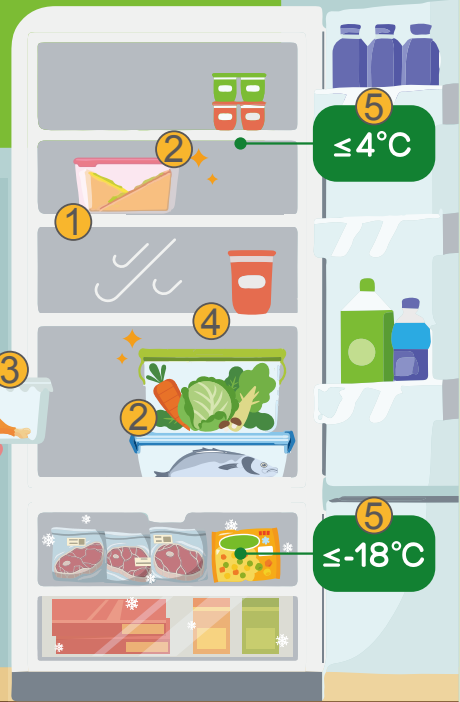
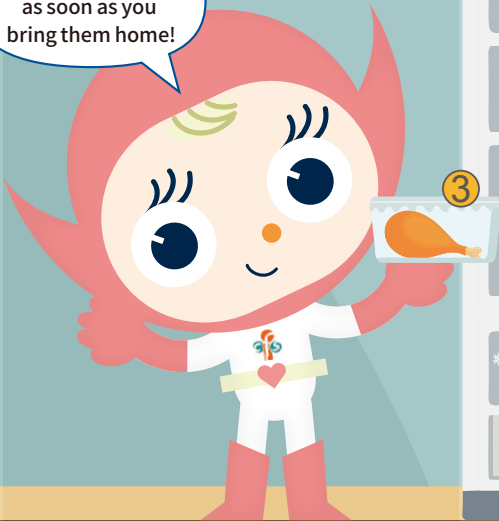
Storage

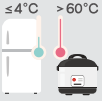


- 1 Do not overload the refrigerator.
- 2 Store raw meat, poultry and seafood below ready-to-eat or cooked food.
- 3 Refrigerate cooked and perishable foods within 2 hours.
- 4 Store food properly in a sealed or covered container.
- 5 Ensure the fridge is kept at or below 4°C and the freezer at or below -18°C.
- 6 Keep food that requires no refrigeration in a cool and dry place.



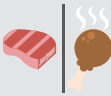
Store foods properly as soon as you bring them home!





Safe Temperature

- Refrigerate cooked and perishable foods **within 2 hours** after purchase.
- Ensure the fridge is kept at **or below 4°C** and the freezer **at or below -18°C** by using a thermometer.
- Do not overload the refrigerator.
- Perishable foods, such as bottled milk and cheese, should be chilled properly.
- Food items to be kept at room temperature, such as canned food, cereals and potatoes, should be stored in **a cool and dry place**.



Separate

In the refrigerator

- Store food in a covered or sealed container (e.g. using plastic wrap) to avoid contact between raw food and ready-to-eat or cooked food.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood below ready-to-eat or cooked food to prevent their juices from dripping onto other food.
- Overstocking the refrigerator should be avoided to maintain cold air circulation.

In the kitchen

- Foods and chemicals such as detergents should not be stored together.



Clean

- Clean and clear the refrigerator and the food cabinet regularly. Discard expired and spoiled foods and do not eat them.

Preparation

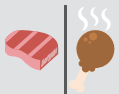


- ① Make sure all utensils and equipment are clean.
- ② Before handling food, wash hands thoroughly with water and liquid soap for 20 seconds.
- ③ Defrost food safely in the fridge.
- ④ Wash fresh vegetables and food under running water.
- ⑤ Cutting boards should be cleaned and sanitised with hot water before use.
- ⑥ Use separate utensils to handle raw and cooked foods.



Clean

- Wash hands:
 - ▶ Wash hands **before handling food, before eating** and often during food preparation. **After touching raw meat or poultry** and **before touching ready-to-eat food**, wash hands under running water again.
 - ▶ When washing, rub hands with liquid soap for **at least 20 seconds**, then rinse under running water.
 - ▶ After rinsing, dry with a clean paper towel.
- Wash vegetables thoroughly under running water, and scrub produce with hard surfaces with a clean produce brush.
- Wash utensils (e.g. dishes, cutlery, cooking utensils, cutting boards), sinks and worktops after each use.
- Keep the kitchen clean and away from insects, rodents and other animals (e.g. pets).
- Scrape food debris into a rubbish bin. Keep rubbish bins covered and remove rubbish regularly.



Separate

- Use separate utensils (e.g. cutting boards, knives) to handle raw food and cooked or ready-to-eat food.

≤4°C >60°C



Safe Temperature

- Before cooking, ① frozen foods can be defrosted in the refrigerator, ② under running tap water, or ③ in the microwave, but not at room temperature. After thawing, food should be used immediately.



Cooking



- 1 Wash hands before cooking.
- 2 Cook food thoroughly to a core temperature of **75°C**.
- 3 Dishes large in portion take a longer time for thorough cooking.
- 4 Bring soups and stews to a boil for at least 1 minute.
- 5 Cook eggs until the yolks are firm. Use pasteurised eggs for undercooked dishes.
- 6 Boil oysters and shellfish at 100°C until their shells are open and continue for 3 to 5 minutes.
- 7 Fish should turn opaque and can be flaked and boned easily.
- 8 Make sure juices of cooked meat and poultry are clear, not red, and no blood is visible when cutting.
- 9 Cover, stir and rotate food when microwaving.





Cook

- Ideally, use a food thermometer to check that the core temperature of food reaches at least **75°C**.
- If you do not have a food thermometer, cook or reheat food thoroughly until it is steaming hot and check:
 - ▶ For cooked meat and poultry, make sure juices are clear, not red, and **no blood is visible** when cutting.
 - ▶ For eggs, **cook until** the yolks are **firm**. Use pasteurised eggs for undercooked dishes.
 - ▶ Bring soups and stews to a **boil for at least 1 minute**.
 - ▶ Oysters and shellfish should be heated to an internal temperature of **90°C for 90 seconds** or boiled at **100°C** until their **shells are open** and continue for **3 to 5 minutes**.
 - ▶ Fish should be cooked until it turns **opaque** and **can be flaked and boned easily**.
- Cover, stir and rotate food when microwaving to ensure thorough heating.
- Certain dishes large in portion, such as Poon Choi, **take a longer time** for thorough cooking.

≤4°C >60°C



Safe Temperature

- Once cooked, food should be consumed as soon as possible.
- Cooked food not for immediate serving should be kept at a proper temperature: cold food at **4°C or below**; hot food at **above 60°C**.

Handling leftovers



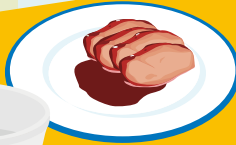
③



①



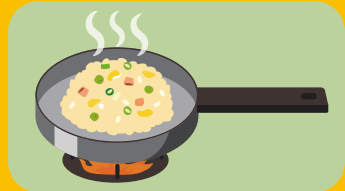
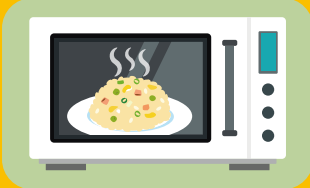
②



④



Reheat
> 1 time

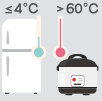


- ① Wash hands before handling leftovers.
- ② Make sure utensils and equipment are clean.
- ③ Refrigerate leftovers within 2 hours.
- ④ Refrigerated leftovers should be reheated thoroughly before consumption, and should not be reheated more than once.
- ⑤ Dispose of leftovers kept for more than 3 days.



⑤





Safe Temperature



- Leftovers should be cooled promptly and stored in the refrigerator **within 2 hours**.
- Leftovers can be cooled quickly by:
 - ▶ Dividing food into smaller portions.
 - ▶ Placing food in a shallow container.
 - ▶ Stirring food regularly.
- If food has been held at:

4°C - 60°C (e.g. room temperature) for	Refrigeration for later use	Immediate consumption
<2 hr		
2-4 hr		
>4 hr		



- Refrigerated leftovers should be reheated thoroughly until they are steaming hot before consumption, and **should not be reheated more than once**.
- Dispose of leftovers that have been kept in the refrigerator for more than 3 days.



Handling takeaway food

- Once the takeaway food is picked up, it should be transported and consumed as soon as possible.
- Takeaway food with non-intact or seriously deformed packaging should be returned.
- If the food is found unclean or unfit for consumption, call the 24-hour hotline 2868 0000 to lodge a complaint with the FEHD.
- Takeaway food required to be reheated can be put in a heat-resistant container before heating.



Choose
Choose safe raw materials



Clean
Keep hands and utensils clean



Separate
Separate raw and cooked food

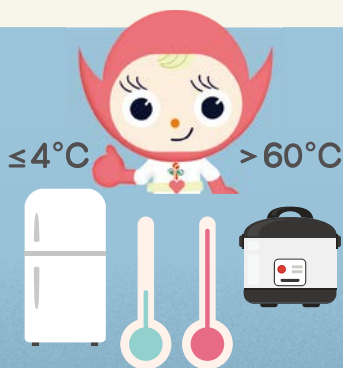


Use the
FIVE KEYS
to Food Safety
for preparing safe and
delicious meals

Cook
Cook thoroughly



Safe temperature
Keep food at safe temperature



This booklet is adapted from "Food Safety at Home: Complete Guide to Food Safety for Domestic Food Handlers and Caregivers". Scan the QR code for details.

cfs.gov.hk/safefood

