

SAFE METHOD:

FREEZING



It is important to take care when freezing food and handle frozen food safely.

SAFETY POINT	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
Put frozen food in the freezer as soon as it is delivered.	If frozen food starts to defrost, harmful bacteria could grow.	Is frozen food put in the freezer as soon as it is delivered? Yes No
If you are freezing fresh food, freeze it as soon as it has been delivered or prepared. Freeze hot food as soon as it has been properly chilled down.	The longer you wait before freezing food, the greater the chance of harmful bacteria growing. (See the 'Chilling down hot food' method.)	 Is fresh and cooked food put in the freezer as soon as it has been delivered, prepared, or chilled down? Yes No
Divide food into smaller portions and put it in containers or freezer bags before freezing.	Smaller portions will freeze (and defrost) more quickly. The centre of larger portions takes longer to freeze, allowing harmful bacteria to grow. Using containers and freezer bags prevents cross-contamination.	 Is food divided into smaller portions to help it freeze better? Yes No Is frozen food stored in containers or freezer bags? Yes No

HOW DO YOU DO THIS?

If you answered 'No' to any of the above questions, write down what you do:



THINK TWICE!

When you freeze food, make a note (e.g. on a sticker) of the date it is frozen and the date when it is removed for defrosting, including the day, month and year.

If you freeze food that has a 'use by' date, (for using later) make sure you freeze it before the use by date is past, and it is important that you clearly note the date you are freezing it.

Once food has been defrosted you should use it immediately (within one day). See the 'Prove it' in the Management section.

WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG

If you find that your freezer is not working properly, you should do the following things:

- **Food that is still frozen** (i.e. hard and icy) should be moved to an alternative freezer straight away. If there is no alternative freezer, defrost food using the 'Defrosting' safe method.
- **Food that has begun to defrost** (i.e. starting to get soft and/or with liquid coming out of it) should be moved to a suitable place to continue defrosting using the 'Defrosting' safe method.
- **Fully defrosted food** (i.e. soft and warm) should be cooked, if appropriate (e.g. raw meat and poultry), until it is piping hot all the way through. After cooking, use the food immediately or chill or freeze it safely straight away. If this is not possible, throw it away.
- **Food that has to be kept frozen** (e.g. ice cream) cannot be re-frozen once it has started to defrost. You will have to use it immediately or throw it away.

Remember, some foods need extra care. See the 'Foods that need extra care' safe method in the Cooking section.

HOW TO STOP THIS HAPPENING AGAIN

- Get your freezer mended or buy a new one.
- Have freezers serviced regularly and check that they are working properly as part of your opening checks.
- Re-organise freezers so there is more space and they are kept closed as much as possible.
- Train staff again on this safe method.
- Increase staff supervision.

Write down what went wrong and what you did about it in your diary.

