


SAFE METHOD:

DEFROSTING



Harmful bacteria can grow in food that is not defrosted properly.

SAFETY POINT	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
Food should be thoroughly defrosted before cooking (unless the manufacturer's instructions tell you to cook from frozen or you have a proven safe method).	If food is still frozen or partially frozen, it will take longer to cook. The outside of the food could be cooked, but the centre might not be, which means it could contain harmful bacteria.	Do you check food is thoroughly defrosted before cooking? Yes If not, what do you do?
OPTIONS FOR DEFROSTING FOOD		
1. Ideally, plan ahead to leave enough time and space to defrost small amounts of food in the fridge.	Putting food in the fridge will keep it at a safe temperature while it is defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes How much time do you allow for defrosting?
2. If you cannot defrost food in the fridge, you could put it in a container and then place it under cold running water.	Cold water will help to speed up defrosting without allowing the outside of the food to get too warm. 	Do you use this method? Yes Which foods do you defrost in this way?
3. Raw meat and poultry (including large joints and whole birds), should not be defrosted under cold running water unless they are in a sealed container. For more information visit the FSA website .	Harmful bacteria could be spread, contaminating sinks, taps and surfaces.	How do you defrost raw meat and poultry?
4. If you use the sink to defrost some foods, make sure the sink is clean and empty. The sink should be cleaned and then disinfected after being used for defrosting.	Cold running water will help speed up defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes Which foods do you defrost in this way?



SAFETY POINTS	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS
5. Or you could defrost food in the microwave on the 'defrost' setting.	This is a fast way to defrost food.	Do you use this method? Yes Which foods do you defrost in this way?
6. If necessary you could defrost food at room temperature. Follow the manufacturer's defrosting instructions. Food should be left out at room temperature for the shortest time possible. Ideally, defrost these foods in the fridge.	Foods will defrost quite quickly at room temperature, but harmful bacteria could grow in food if it gets too warm while defrosting.	Do you use this method? Yes Which foods do you defrost in this way?
7. If you have another method of defrosting, write the details here:		Which foods do you defrost in this way?

THINK TWICE!

Keep meat/poultry separate from other food when it is defrosting, to prevent cross-contamination. Once food has been defrosted you should cook until it is piping hot all the way through. See the 'Cooking Safely' section. After cooking, use the food immediately or chill or freeze it safely straight away.

CHECK IT	WHY?	HOW DO YOU DO THIS?
When you think food has defrosted, it is important to check to make sure.	The outside may look defrosted but the inside could still be frozen.	Check for ice crystals in the food using your hand or a skewer. Do you use this check? Yes
		With birds, check the joints are flexible. Do you use this check? Yes
		If you use another check, write the details here:



WHAT TO DO IF THINGS GO WRONG	HOW TO STOP THIS HAPPENING AGAIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If food has not fully defrosted, continue to defrost the food until no ice crystals are left. Test again before cooking or reheating. Speed up the defrosting process e.g. by using cold water or a microwave (see the front of this sheet). Use an alternative menu item. If you do not have time to defrost for longer, replace the dish with a similar dish that is ready to serve. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change your defrosting method and make it safer, e.g. defrost smaller amounts. Make sure you allow enough time to defrost. Train staff again on this safe method. Improve staff supervision. If you defrost lots of food in your business you may wish to consider creating extra fridge space or using a special defrosting cabinet.

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

