COOL HOT FOODS

from 140°F to 40°F or colder within four hours. Quick Cooling slows the growth of harmful bacteria. Harmful bacteria can cause foodborne illness.

COOL FOODS USING ONE OF THESE STEPS:

* Reduce the size of large pieces of hot food by cutting large items into smaller pieces (no more than 2 in. thick). Divide large batches into smaller portions.

* Pour thick foods into pre-chilled shallow pans to a depth of no more than two inches. Pour thinner liquids to no more than 3 inches deep. Thick foods include foods such as gravy, chili, stew, mashed potatoes, and most vegetables. Thin foods would include most soups, excluding chowder.

* Put a mixture of half ice and cold water in a large pan or sink. Immerse the pan of hot food into the ice water bath.
* When the food reaches a temperature of 70°F, cover it, and transfer it to a refrigerator to complete the cooling process.

* Place the pans of food in a quick chill unit or a blast chiller for quick cooling.

**REMEMBER TO:**

* Stir food regularly

* Check the temperature of food in several places to make sure it will cool within 4 hours.

* Never use the refrigerator or freezer to cool large quantities of hot food.

* Label cooled and stored foods with date, food type and time prepared.

* Take corrective action if food is not cooled to 40 °F within 4 hours. Reheat to 165 °F for 15 seconds in two hours. Discard food if it is not served immediately.

Materials in the *For Safety's Sake* series were produced by members of a special Food Safety Agent Resource Team and have been peer reviewed by individuals from Family & Consumer Sciences and The Food Science Department at North Carolina State University.

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