

Keep it clean when preparing and cooking your meal

Preparing

- Wash your hands and nails with soap and water, and dry well, before you handle any food
- Use a separate board and knife for preparing raw meats and vegetables
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, which will take 24 hours, or in the microwave as per instructions – never on the bench.
- Wash all fruits and vegetables as dirt and dust can house bacteria



Cooking

- Make sure your food is cooked right through – raw food should be cooked thoroughly and heated to 75°C to destroy the bacteria, especially meat and chicken
- High risk foods include meat and poultry, seafood, pasta and rice
- Reheat prepared foods to 60°C – only reheat once after cooking
- Keep hot foods hot (60°C + and cold foods cold (5°C or less)

Important points for the microwave

- Foods thawed in the microwave should be cooked straight away. You can freeze it after it has been cooked.
- When cooking and reheating, make sure you rotate and stir food, as microwaves heat food unevenly and can leave cold spots.
- Cut food into evenly sized pieces as these will all take about the same time to cook.
- Cover the container of food with plastic wrap or a microwave-safe lid, as this will help to trap the steam and helping the food to cook.



Cleaning Up

- Always wash your board after preparing meats and before other foods
- Use hot water and detergent to clean bench tops, cutting boards, knives and cooking equipment
- Change or disinfect sponges or dishcloths regularly and spread out to dry after use
- Never use the same dishcloths for cleaning floors and food preparation surfaces. Have a separate cloth or paper towel, to clean up spills on floor.

Food Storage

- Store cooked meats and raw foods in bottom shelf of refrigerator to avoid raw juices dripping onto and contaminating other foods.
- Cover and put leftover food in the fridge as soon as there is no steam rising, do not leave to cool on the bench
- Check “use by” and “best before” dates
- Put the date on foods before you put them in the freezer
- Cool hot food quickly. Once the steam has stopped rising from the dish, place immediately into the fridge or freezer, in a shallow container, covered.
- Always store food in the fridge with a cover or lid.
- Avoid re-freezing defrosted food
- Put a thermometer in your fridge and freezer and check the temperatures – fridge $<5^{\circ}\text{C}$ and freezer $<-18^{\circ}\text{C}$.
- Try not to overcrowd your fridge as this may cause the temperature to rise.

