



NAVY AND MARINE CORPS PUBLIC HEALTH CENTER

IMPROVING READINESS THROUGH PUBLIC HEALTH ACTION

Safe Defrosting Methods

- There are three safe methods to defrost (or thaw) food; refrigerator, cold water and microwave.
- Raw or cooked meat, poultry or egg products must be kept at a safe temperature during thawing.
- Perishable foods should never be thawed on the counter, in hot water and must not be allowed to thaw at room temperature.

Refrigerator

Planning ahead is important to this method because of the lengthy time involved.

Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator at a temperature of 41°F or below.

Cold Water

A faster thawing method than the refrigerator, but requires more attention.

Food should remain in the original, airtight packaging or placed in a leak-proof package or plastic bag.

The bag may be submerged in cold water, changing the water every 30 minutes so it continues to thaw. Food must be cooked immediately after it is completely thawed.

Microwave

Food thawed in a microwave must be cooked immediately after thawing because some areas of the food may become warm and begin to cook during the thawing.

Food must be cooked immediately because any bacteria present wouldn't have been destroyed and the food may have reached optimal temperature (temperature danger zone) for bacteria to grow.

For more information, resources and tools on food safety:

- Visit [NMCPHC PPS-EH Food Sanitation and Safety](#)
- Contact your local Military Treatment Facility's Preventive Medicine office.



Photo courtesy of Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA