When thawing food, place it on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator to ensure that it remains cold while it thaws, and does not contaminate other food. You can use a microwave oven to thaw food, but the food must be cooked immediately afterwards.

Food should be properly thawed before it is cooked, to make sure that it cooks all the way through. If you have to cook food that is still frozen, take extra care to make sure that the food is cooked right through, and that its core temperature reaches 75˚C.

Packing and Serving Prepared Food

You should store food in a material which is clean, non-toxic, and strong enough for the job. Store packing material away from the food preparation area so it does not become contaminated.

Store unused food containers upside down so dust and dirt do not get into them. Wash and sanitise containers before using them. Do not re-use containers that are only meant to be used once.

When serving food, make sure that all cutlery and crockery is clean and undamaged.

To Find Out More

There are other pamphlets on food safety available from the Department of Human Services, including:
- *Personal Hygiene for People Working with Food*
- *Safe Food Storage and Display*
- *Food Poisoning and How to Prevent It.*

For more detailed information there are guidelines published by Food Safety Victoria. You can get these from your local Council or from Food Safety Victoria. Training Providers can be found on the National Training Information Service website www.ntis.gov.au

Food Safety Victoria Hotline 1300 364 352

www.foodsafety.vic.gov.au

Hygienic Food Preparation and Handling

Victoria
The Place To Be

Food poisoning is a serious health problem. As a person who handles food — whether you are a kitchen hand, a food process worker, a shop assistant or a sandwich hand — you have an important responsibility to handle food safely.

By preparing and handling food hygienically, you:
- Protect other people from getting sick
- Protect your job
- Protect your reputation in the food industry
- Protect your business.

Cross-Contamination

Raw food contains bacteria, including bacteria which can cause food poisoning. If raw food is cooked thoroughly, to over 75°C, most of the bacteria will be killed.

If food which has been cooked or is ready-to-eat comes into contact with raw food, then bacteria can contaminate the cooked food. This is called *cross contamination*.

For this reason, it's very important to keep raw food separate from cooked and ready-to-eat food.

One case of food poisoning can close down a business

Preparing Food

When you are preparing both raw and cooked or ready-to-eat food, you should not use the same knives, chopping boards or other equipment for both sorts of food. If it is not possible to use different equipment, you must thoroughly wash equipment in hot soapy water.

Thoroughly rinse all fruit and vegetables in clean water, to remove soil, bacteria, insects and chemicals.

Handling Food

Everyone has bacteria on their bodies. Even healthy people can spread bacteria onto food by touching it with their hands. If you have to touch food, wash your hands thoroughly first.

Raw food that is to be cooked can be safely handled with bare hands. To handle cooked or ready-to-eat food, use clean and sanitised utensils (tongs, spoons, spatula).
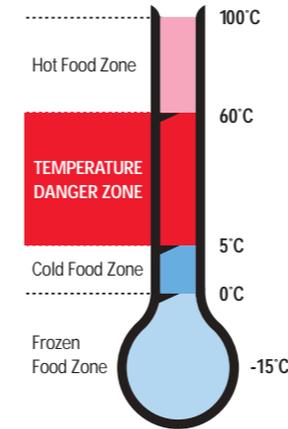
Gloves

If you are using gloves, change them at least once every hour. Use only clean diposable gloves.

Change your gloves:
- If they become contaminated
- If they tear
- When switching between raw and ready-to-eat food
- When changing jobs
- After taking rubbish out
- After sweeping, mopping and cleaning.

Always use fresh gloves. Always wash your hands before putting on gloves.

Cooking and Heating Food

Bacteria grow quickly when the temperature is between 5°C and 60°C. This is called the *Temperature Danger Zone*.

It is very important that you do not keep food in the Temperature Danger Zone longer than is absolutely necessary. Make sure all foods, particularly meat, poultry, eggs, and dairy products, are cooked until core temperature reaches 75°C. This will kill most bacteria.

Cooling Food

Food just cooked should not be left out to cool for more than one hour. Once it has cooled, the food should be immediately placed in the refrigerator.

Large portions of food cool faster if you put them in shallow trays (no deeper than 10 cm) or divide them into smaller pieces.

Freezing and Thawing Food

You should never re-freeze thawed food. When frozen food is thawing, the bacteria in it start to multiply. If the food is re-frozen, the bacteria do not die and are still there when the food is thawed again.