## Reheating prepared food

**Goal:** Ensure food is reheated quickly and thoroughly.

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<th>What can go wrong?</th>
<th>What can I do?</th>
<th>How can I check?</th>
<th>What if it is not right?</th>
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<tr>
<td>Food poisoning bacteria can survive if food is not properly reheated</td>
<td>Reheat food thoroughly to kill food poisoning bacteria. Always reheat food until it is hot (75°C or hotter) all the way through. Use cooking time and cooking equipment temperatures to achieve this. Do not use bain-maries to reheat food. Reheat according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Only reheat food once and discard any left overs.</td>
<td>Use a probe thermometer to regularly measure the temperature of the thickest part of the food. Check that: • reheated food is hot (steaming) all the way through • liquids bubble rapidly when stirred.</td>
<td>Increase the reheating time or temperature. Reduce the portion size of food being reheated. Review your reheating method. Adjust recipe cards or equipment settings if necessary. Repair or replace equipment.</td>
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| Cross-contamination of food through poor personal hygiene or from raw food to reheated food, or allergenic to non-allergenic foods | Follow the instructions in the Preparation section (pages 23–25) to limit risks of contamination. Protect food from cross-contamination by using clean utensils and equipment during any handling. | Regularly look at how food is being reheated. | Throw away food if you suspect it has been contaminated. If non-allergenic food may be contaminated with an allergen, make sure that it is not used in the preparation of food that is intended to be allergen free. If food may include allergens, follow the instructions on pages 47 and 48 about making information available to customers and staff. |
What are the risks?

Reheating food safely means cooking it again, not just warming it up. Bacteria can survive in cooked reheated food if it is not heated to at least 75°C in the centre. Some bacteria can even survive cooking.

Bacteria introduced after cooking may multiply if reheating is inadequate, making the food unsafe. Bacteria can be transferred to food from unwashed equipment, utensils and hands.

Tips

☑ Where possible, stir or mix food to make sure there are no cold spots and the food is evenly reheated.

☑ Preheat equipment such as ovens and grills before use. If food takes longer to reheat than the recommended reheating times in recipes or the manufacturer’s instructions it may not be long enough to kill bacteria.

☑ If you are reheating food in a microwave, follow the manufacturer’s instructions, including advice on standing and stirring. Manufacturers have tested their instructions to make sure that foods will be properly reheated. When food is microwaved, it can be very hot at the edges and still be cold in the centre. Regular stirring helps to prevent this.

☑ To find out more about reheating food containing allergens and how you may help customers with questions, see <www.health.vic.gov.au/foodsafety>.