**Food Safety Thrives
When You Focus On Five**

Avoid Time-Temperature Abuse

n f s e m

National Food Safety Education Month®

**Manager:** Having the right thermometer for the job can encourage employees to check product temperatures. For example, providing employees with digital thermometers allows them to quickly check products. In addition, make sure policies are in place for monitoring temperatures. Identify what food items should be checked, how often, and by whom. Then, assign duties to employees in each area.
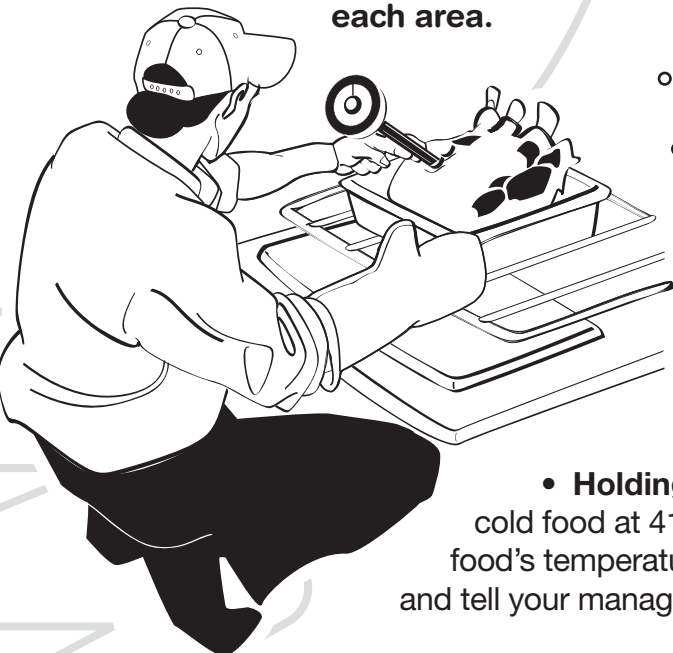
Some food requires time and temperature control to keep it safe. It is called TCS food (Time and Temperature Control for Safety). Disease-causing pathogens can grow well in TCS food when it is kept at temperatures between 41°F and 135°F (5°C and 57°C). This temperature range is known as the temperature danger zone. If TCS food is kept at these temperatures for more than four hours, pathogens can grow to levels high enough to make someone sick. The only way to reduce pathogens in food to safe levels is to cook it.

Cooking, cooling, and holding TCS food the right way can help to keep it safe.

- **Cooking TCS food.** Cook TCS food to the following internal temperatures for at least 15 seconds: poultry: 165°F (74°C); ground meat: 155°F (68°C); fish: 145°F (63°C); pork and beef (steaks or chops): 145°F (63°C).

- **Cooling TCS food.**

  o Never cool food at room temperature.

  o Never cool large amounts of hot food in a cooler.

  o Cool food following these steps: First, cool food from 135°F to 70°F (57°C to 21°C) within two hours. Then cool food to 41°F (5°C) or lower in the next four hours.

- **Reheating TCS food.** Heat it to an internal temperature of 165°F (74°C) for 15 seconds within two hours. Never use hot-holding equipment to reheat food unless it has been made to do this.

- **Holding TCS food.** Keep hot food at 135°F (57°C) or higher, and cold food at 41°F (5°C) or lower. Check the food's temperature at least every four hours, and tell your manager if it's not correct.

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Cook It Up!

Directions: Write in the required minimum internal
temperature for each food item.

❶ Beef steak

_____

❷ Chicken

_____

❸ Hamburger patties

_____

❹ Fish

_____

❺ Pork chop

_____

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Is It Safe?

Directions: **Read this story and decide whether the food is safe to serve.**

On Monday morning, Clay prepared a double batch of chili. He took half of the chili and decided to save it for lunch the next day. At noon, he put the pot of chili in ice water to cool. When he checked the chili at 2:00 p.m., the chili had cooled to 68℉ (20℃). He put the pot of chili in the cooler.
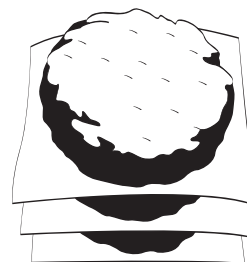
When Clay checked the chili at 5:00 p.m., the temperature was 38℉ (3℃). The next morning, Clay reheated the chili to 155℉ (68℃) and placed it on the steam table.

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