TEMPERATURE CONTROL IN COOKING AND FOOD SERVICE

TOPIC:	Temperature Control
AUDIENCE:	Food service staff
DATE:	[Enter the training date]

Purpose / Why Does it Matter

In healthcare food service settings, patients are often more vulnerable to foodborne illness. Proper temperature control helps prevent harmful bacterial growth, ensures food safety and quality, supports regulatory compliance, and protects patient health and recovery.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this in-service, participants will be able to:

1. Explain why temperature control is critical in healthcare food service.
2. Identify the temperature danger zone.
3. State safe minimum internal cooking temperatures for common foods.
4. Demonstrate proper hot holding, cold holding, cooling, and reheating practices.
5. Use and care for food thermometers correctly.

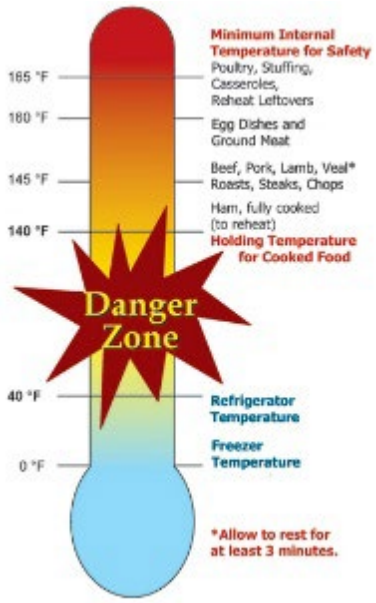
KEY INFORMATION

Why Temperature Control Matters

- Protects vulnerable patients
- Prevents foodborne illness
- Ensures food safety and quality
- Time/Temperature Controlled for Safety
- Supports regulatory compliance

The Temperature Danger Zone

- 40°F to 140°F (4°C to 60°C)
- Bacteria grow rapidly in this range
- Food should not remain in the danger zone for more than 2 hours



Safe Cooking Temperatures

1. Always use a calibrated food thermometer and measure the thickest part of the food.
2. Poultry (chicken, turkey): 165°F (74°C)
3. Ground meats (beef, pork): 155°F (68°C)
4. Seafood and whole cuts of beef or pork: 145°F (63°C)
5. Eggs held hot: 155°F (68°C)
6. Eggs for immediate service: 145°F (63°C)
7. Reheated foods: 165°F (74°C) within 2 hours

Food Holding Guidelines

Hot Holding:

- Maintain food at 140°F (60°C) or higher (Note: Some states allow135°F)
- Stir regularly to distribute heat evenly
- Check temperatures at least every 2 hours
- If food drops below 140°F for more than 2 hours, discard it

Cold Holding:

- Keep food at 40°F (4°C) or lower
- Use refrigeration or ice baths as needed; keep lids closed as much as possible

Reheating Food Safely

- Reheat food to 165°F (74°C) within 2 hours
- Do not use steam tables or hot holding equipment to reheat
- Stir and check temperatures frequently

Cooling Food Properly

- Use the two-stage cooling rule: 140°F to 70°F within 2 hours, then 70°F to 40°F within 4 hours
- Use ice baths
- Use shallow pans
- Divide food into smaller portions
- Use blast chillers if available

Thermometer Use and Care

- Clean and sanitize before and after each use
- Calibrate regularly (ice-point method = 32°F)
- Store properly to prevent contamination

Common Mistakes to Avoid

- Guessing temperature without a thermometer
- Leaving food out too long
- Overloading refrigerators
- Not stirring hot-held food
- Reheating food multiple times

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

NAME: _____ **DATE:** _____

1. What is the temperature danger zone?

☐ **A.** 0°F–32°F

☐ **B.** 40°F–140°F

☐ **C.** 135°F–165°F

☐ **D.** 32°F–70°F

2. Minimum internal cooking temperature for poultry?

☐ **A.** 145°F

☐ **B.** 155°F

☐ **C.** 165°F

☐ **D.** 135°F

3. How long can food safely stay in the danger zone?

☐ **A.** 30 minutes

☐ **B.** 1 hour

☐ **C.** 2 hours

☐ **D.** 4 hours

4. What temperature must hot food be held at or above?

☐ **A.** 125°F

☐ **B.** 140°F

☐ **C.** 145°F

☐ **D.** 155°F

5. Reheated food must reach:

☐ **A.** 135°F

☐ **B.** 145°F

☐ **C.** 155°F

☐ **D.** 165°F

6. You can tell food temperature by touch if experienced.

☐ **True**

☐ **False**

7. Cold food must be kept at 40°F or lower.

☐ **True**

☐ **False**

8. Food should cool from 135°F to 40°F within 6 hours.

☐ **True**

☐ **False**

10. Thermometers should be cleaned and sanitized between uses.

☐ **True**

☐ **False**

Knowledge Check Answer Key

1. B
2. C
3. C
4. B
5. D
6. False
7. True
8. False
9. True
10. True

DATE:	[Enter date]
TRAINER NAME:	[Enter trainer name]

In-Service Attendee Sign-in

DATE: _____

ATTENDEE NAMES:
