



#### DID YOU KNOW?

Less than half of shoppers are diligent about thawing meat in the refrigerator.

– FMI Trends, 2009



## BAC Down! Refrigerate Promptly and Properly

Refrigeration at 40°F or below is one of the most effective ways to reduce risk of foodborne illness. Microorganisms grow more rapidly at warmer temperatures, and research shows that keeping a constant refrigerator temperature of 40°F or below helps slow growth of these harmful microbes.



### LISTERIOSIS

*The bacterium *Listeria monocytogenes* can grow at refrigerator temperatures. Listeriosis has the second highest fatality rate among all infections caused by foodborne pathogens.*

*Reduce your risk of listeriosis and other foodborne illnesses. Keep your fridge at 40°F or below as measured with an appliance thermometer.*

## The Cool Rules

### Use This Tool to Keep It Cool

Use a refrigerator thermometer to be sure the temperature is consistently 40°F or below.

### The Chill Factor

Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared foods and leftovers within two hours of purchase or use. Always marinate foods in the refrigerator.

### The Thaw Law

Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator. If you will cook food immediately, for a quick thaw, defrost in the microwave or enclose the food in an airtight package and submerge it in cold water.

### Divide and Conquer

Separate large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quicker cooling in the refrigerator.



### Avoid the Pack Attack

Do not overstuff the refrigerator. Cold air must circulate to keep food safe.

### Rotate Before It's Too Late

Use or discard chilled foods as recommended in the USDA Cold Storage Chart found at [www.fightbac.org/coldstorage](http://www.fightbac.org/coldstorage).

### Don't Go Too Low

As you approach 32°F, ice crystals can begin to form and lower the quality of foods such as raw fruits, vegetables and eggs. A refrigerator thermometer will help you determine whether you are too close to this temperature.

