



**A weekly question/answer column**

## **How Can I Keep My Kitchen Safe From Harmful Bacteria?**

*Charlotte Brennand\* answers:*

**(Fourth in a four-part series on food safety in the kitchen— CHILL)**

Refrigerate foods quickly because cold temperatures keep harmful bacteria from growing and multiplying. So, set your refrigerator no higher than 40 degrees and the freezer unit at 0 degrees. Check these temperatures occasionally with an appliance thermometer. Also follow these steps:

- Refrigerate or freeze perishable prepared foods and leftovers within two hours. The sooner the better.
- Never defrost food at room temperature. Thaw food in the refrigerator, under cold running water or in the microwave. Marinate foods in the refrigerator.
- If food is thawed in a microwave, cook immediately afterwards.
- Divide large amounts of leftovers into shallow containers for quick cooling in the refrigerator.
- Don't pack the refrigerator. Cool air must circulate to keep food safe

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