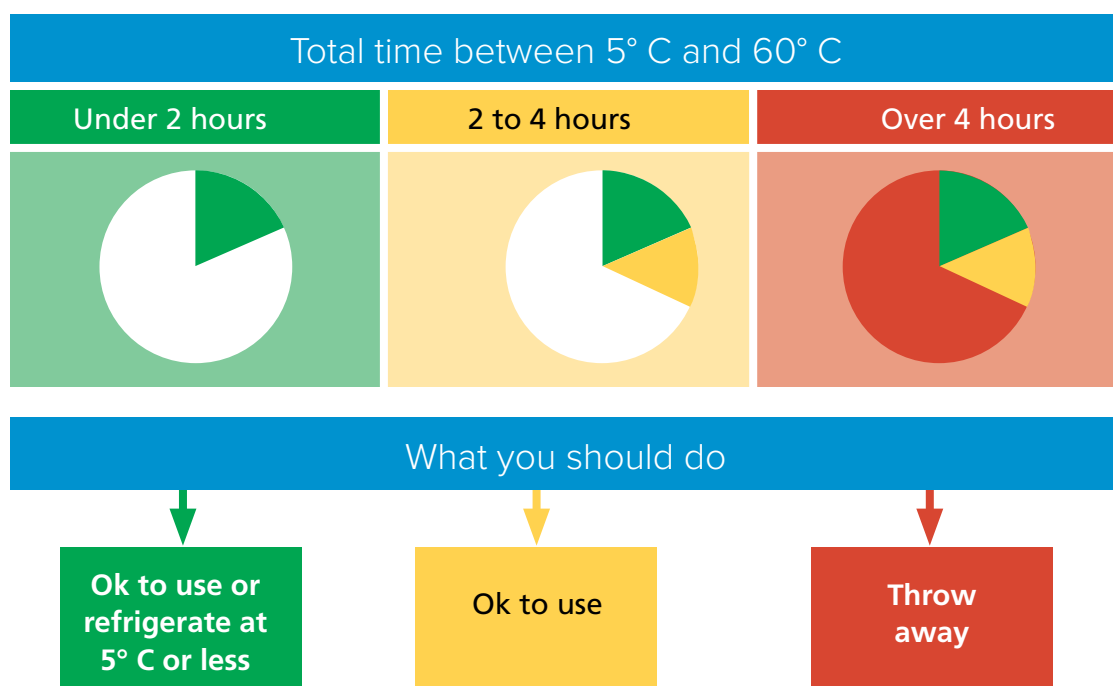


2 Hour/4 Hour Rule Explained

December 2009

The 2 Hour/ 4 Hour Rule tells you how long freshly potentially hazardous foods*, foods like cooked meat and foods containing meat, dairy products, prepared fruits and vegetables, cooked rice and pasta, and cooked or processed foods containing eggs, can be safely held at temperatures in the danger zone; that is between 5° C and 60° C.

It takes time for food poisoning bacteria to grow to unsafe levels. Apply the following time limits to ensure these risky type foods remain safe to eat.



The total time includes all the time the food has been at room temperature, for example during delivery, preparation and transportation.

Example

A sandwich is freshly prepared at 12 noon and placed in a non-refrigerated display case:

(1) can keep the sandwich out of refrigeration for up to 2 hours (until 2 pm) and then refrigerate and bring out again later in the day, say 4 pm (not to go back into the refrigerator for later use after this point). If not used by 6 pm (4 hours out of temperature control in total) then throw it away,

OR

(2) can keep the sandwich out of temperature control (refrigeration) for up to 4 hours straight- until 4 pm- then you need to throw it away.

* Foods that are not potentially hazardous and can be stored out of temperature control are foods like dried fruit, salted dried meats, hard cheeses, dried pasta and other dried foods, breads, unopened canned and bottled food, spreads and sauces such as tomato and soy sauce.