



Nutrition at Work: Food Safety

Today's workplaces can come equipped with many conveniences to aid not only in lunch time options but also provide the opportunity to eat healthfully. There are a few relatively affordable options to ensure that your employees have a place to store and prepare nutritious meals. A sink to wash hands, fruits, and veggies is a good start, and the additions highlighted below can help create a healthy work environment.

Refrigeration



Healthy foods are often times *fresh* foods. Most fresh foods benefit from or require some refrigeration. Having a fridge (or even a mini fridge) at work could assure employees they can pack a nutritious meal and know that they can consume it safely

knowing it is kept at the proper temperature. The Illinois Department of Public Health encourages remembering the food danger zone: **41°F - 135°F**. Potentially hazardous foods exposed to this temperature range for a cumulative total of more than **four hours** are not safe to eat. Below is a chart listing the proper temperatures for different types of foods/settings. (Use a fridge thermometer to monitor.)

Refrigeration (air) temperature	38° F or below
Refrigeration (food) temperature	41° F or below
Seafood	30° F - 34° F
Fresh produce	41° F - 45° F
Deep chill	26° F - 32° F
Freezer (food) temperature	0° F or below
Dry storage	50° F - 70° F



Microwaves and Toaster Ovens

Keeping food properly chilled is important to make sure bacteria doesn't grow, however heating it up to proper temperatures is also important to confirm any pathogens (harmful bacteria) are destroyed. Microwaves and/or toaster ovens can provide the power needed to safeguard against pathogens in foods. To make sure harmful bacteria have been killed in your foods, it's important to cook them to 165°F or higher. Here's how:

- When you microwave, stir food halfway through heating.
- If the food label says, "Let stand for "x" minutes after cooking," *don't skimp on the standing time*. Letting microwaved food sit for a few minutes helps your food cook more completely by allowing colder areas of food time to absorb heat from hotter areas. That extra minute or two could mean the difference between a delicious meal and food poisoning.
- After waiting a few minutes, check the center/thickest part of the food with a food thermometer to make sure it is at least **165°F or above**.

Food Thermometers

Food thermometers only run a couple of dollars and are easy to keep clean and can help guarantee foods are a safe temperatures for storage or consumption.

Resource: http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/fdd/fdd_fs_foodservice.htm

THE REFRIGERATOR

Demystified

Up to 40 percent of food in the U.S. is never eaten. Stocking your fridge with these tips will help make a dent in food waste, saving you money while you do it.



NEVER LET ICE BUILD UP

It forces your fridge to use more energy.

THE UPPER SHELVES

THE UPPER SHELVES ARE SUITABLE FOR STORE AND ARE A GREAT PLACE TO STORE ITEMS THAT DON'T NEED A VERY SAFETY HIGH

GREAT FOR LEFTOVERS, SPINACH, EGGS, FAT FROM LEFT FRONT OR CHEESE

THE LOWER SHELVES

FOODS WITH A HIGHER SAFETY RISK ARE BETTER OFF IN COOLEST SECTION.

THE BOTTOM SHELF IS THE COOLEST PLACE IN THE FRIDGE. STORE MEAT, POULTRY AND FISH HERE IN TRAYS TO PREVENT LEAK FROM DRIPPING

HIGH & LOW HUMIDITY DRAWERS



CARROTS, LEAFY GREENS, SPINACH, ASPARAGUS, BASIL, BROCCOLI, ETC...

PEARS, APPLES, BANANAS, MUSHROOMS, PEPPERS, AVOCADOS, BEANS, ETC...

Put items in the low humidity drawer, separating those that require wet, in the high humidity drawer.

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The adjustable layers on the crisper drawers change humidity levels. If your refrigerator has them, set one to high (forward, less air coming in) and one to low (open, more air coming in).



LEAVING THE FRIDGE DOOR OPEN



When you pour milk into your cereal, wastes 7% of a fridge's energy, according to Home Energy Magazine.



That's the same as 600-2000 60W light bulbs each year.*

THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR IS THE WARMEST PART OF THE FRIDGE. GETTING A NICE DOSE OF WARM AIR EVERY TIME THE DOOR IS OPENED.

It's a good place for condiments. It is not a good place for anything that is even moderately perishable. Though some models may have a compartment for eggs in the door, it's probably a better idea to keep them on one of the main shelves.



40 DEGREES OR BELOW

Because bacteria grow most rapidly between 40° and 140°, your fridge should be set to maintain a temperature of 40° or below.



DO NOT OVERFILL

The fridge needs air to circulate to be efficient. Allow enough space in between foods so that cold air can circulate all around.

Find out more about reducing food waste at www.nrdc.org/food/wasted-food.asp