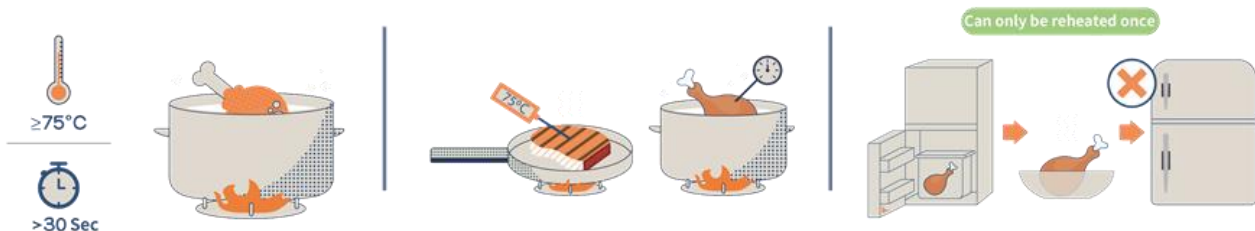


**In a nutshell:** Cooking and reheating are critical steps in keeping food safe. Inadequate cooking and reheating can easily result in foodborne illnesses

Different foods require different cooking temperatures and time:

- When cooking or reheating food, the core temperature of the food should reach at least 75°C for 30 seconds.
- You can also cook food safely with other equivalent temperature / time combinations, such as cooking at 70°C for 2 minutes or 65°C for 10 minutes.
- A food thermometer should be used to measure the core temperature of the food. Keep a record of the measurement. When measuring the temperature, the probe should be inserted into the thickest part of the food. The thermometer must be cleaned and disinfected before and after each use.
- Reheating precooked food means cooking again, not just warming up. Reheat the food only once, and do not refrigerate it again as prolonged exposure to dangerous temperatures can lead to bacterial growth.



If a food thermometer is not available, cook or reheat food well until it comes to a boil, then check on:

- Meat and poultry: Make sure that juices are clear, not red, and blood is not visible when cutting the cooked meat.
- Eggs: Egg yolks should be cooked until they are firm. Use pasteurised eggs for raw or lightly cooked dishes.
- Shellfish: Bring to a boil for at least 5 minutes.
- Soups and stews: Bring to a boil for at least 1 minute.
- Microwaved food: Rotate or stir the food during cooking to evenly disperse the heat. After cooking, the food can be left to stand for at least 2 minutes so that all parts can reach the required temperature.



Hot-holding equipment such as a bain-marie may not produce sufficient heat for cooking or reheating food.

## Slow cooking / sous vide cooking

Slow cooking / sous vide cooking is gaining popularity, but if the food is not thoroughly cooked, it poses food safety risks, particularly for susceptible consumers. When practising slow cooking / sous vide cooking, keep the following points in mind:

- The core temperature of sous vide food should not be less than 60°C for 45 minutes.
- Choose fresh and high-quality ingredients from reliable suppliers.
- Only food-grade plastic bags certified by the manufacturer can be used in sous vide cooking.
- Food without proper defrosting should not be cooked directly in any slow cooking devices because extended exposure to dangerous temperatures allows harmful bacteria to grow rapidly.
- The water in the slow cooking tank must be kept at a consistent temperature which must be checked on a regular basis to ensure that the food is slow cooked at the proper temperature.
- Remove as much air as possible from the bag to improve the direct contact surfaces between the food and the constant temperature water to shorten the slow cooking period.
- The temperature / time combination for slow cooking will vary depending on the texture, origin, thickness and weight of the food, as well as the processing operations. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct regular microbiological testing to ensure food safety.