

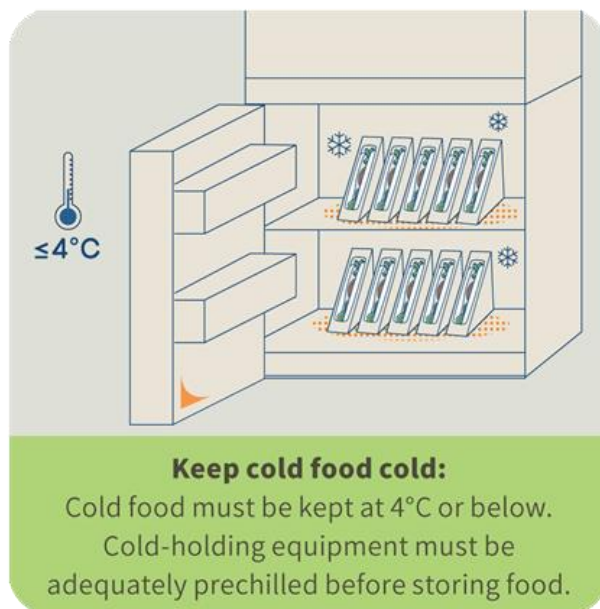
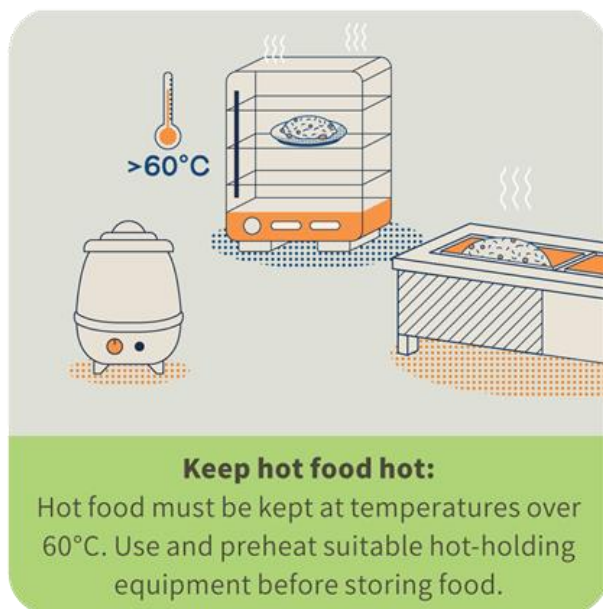
# Hot / cold holding and display



**In a nutshell:** Precooked food should be kept in hot- or cold-holding devices within 2 hours if not served immediately or for display.

Precooked food, especially meat, poultry and gravy (e.g. stewed beef or curry), should be stored properly in hot or cold-holding devices within 2 hours if not for immediate serving:

- **Keep hot food hot:** Hot food must be kept at temperatures over 60°C. Use and preheat suitable hot-holding equipment before storing food.
- **Keep cold food cold:** Cold food must be kept at 4°C or below. Cold-holding equipment must be adequately pre-chilled before storing food.
- Check regularly with a thermometer and if the temperature of the hot or cold-holding equipment deviates by more than 1°C, a check-up is warranted.
- Food (including precooked food) must be cooked thoroughly to steaming hot before hot holding begins.



Prolonged storage of food at room temperature can allow bacteria to thrive and spores to germinate, proliferating and even generating heat-resistant toxins.

## Food display

Some restaurants, such as hot food takeaway shops, and hotel buffets have food displays. If food is displayed improperly, there is a high risk of contamination or spoilage. When displaying food, the following items must be considered:

- If the food is displayed after being thoroughly cooked, it should be stored at a safe temperature within two hours: hot food at above 60°C; cold food at 4°C or below:
  - **Hot food:** Ensure that the chafing dish or bain-marie is preheated to above 60°C before placing food in it.
  - **Cold food:** Cold-holding equipment such as a freezer, ice pool or ice plate should be adequately pre-chilled to 4°C or below before being used to keep food.
- Hot-holding equipment, whether wet or electronic, should be regularly cleaned. Always make sure the water pan has adequate hot water.



Hot-holding devices are only intended for holding hot food for a short period of time and are not suitable for cooking or reheating food.

- Replace ice cubes and clean ice plates frequently, and avoid placing food directly on them.
- Arrange for staff to monitor the food displayed at buffet tables so that contaminated food can be removed as needed when customers pick up food improperly or tamper with uncovered food. Raw and cooked foods should be displayed separately and provide customers with separate utensils to handle foods.
- Display food in small portions to shorten the display time. Refresh food displays with completely fresh batches of food. Do not top up a displayed batch of foods with a fresh one.
- All food on display should be consumed within 4 hours of cooking.



### Be careful of dangerous holding temperatures

Some food business operators may put food in a hot-holding equipment at a temperature lower than 60°C, say 45°C, such that the food does not dry out quickly. This practice of keeping the food at dangerous temperatures allows harmful bacteria to proliferate. Therefore, food business operators should:

- Constantly monitor and ensure that food is stored at above 60°C.
- Display food as shortly as feasible.
- Plan ahead to avoid preparing food too far in advance.
- Remind customers to consume the food soon after purchase.