

# Soups And Casseroles

## Store Leftovers Properly

Hot foods need to be kept at 140° F or above and cold foods need to be kept at 40° F or below. When foods are not kept at the proper temperatures bacteria will begin to grow, which could lead to a foodborne illness. Follow the rules listed below to prevent bacteria from growing.

- Hot foods need to reach 40° F within 2 hours of being removed from the heat source (stove, oven, microwave oven, etc.). Any perishable food, including cut produce, left at room temperature for more than 2 hours needs to be thrown in the garbage.



**Remember,  
the clock is ticking.**

- Place all of your leftovers in a clean, preferably airtight storage container or resealable food storage bag.
- Be sure to divide large amounts of leftover foods into smaller portions so they will cool more quickly. Shallow containers no more than 4 inches deep work the best.

- If you are going to use plastic wrap to cover your leftovers, be sure to wrap tightly so there is a good seal.
- It is important to label your leftovers with the name and date they were opened or prepared. Just don't forget to check the date frequently, throwing the old leftovers into the garbage. (See storage chart in the Other Items section.)
- Leftovers from a restaurant also need to reach a temperature of 40°F within 2 hours. It is not a good idea to run errands or go to a movie before returning home if there are leftovers in the car.



### What NOT To Do When Storing Leftovers

- Metal pots/pans used to cook food do not make good containers for storing leftovers.
- Placing a paper towel or a loose piece of aluminum foil over a plate of leftovers does not count as covering leftovers.
- Do not leave the serving spoon in the storage container.
- Do not rely on your sense of smell, touch, or taste to determine if a leftover is still safe to eat.

