# Safe Food Thawing

This playbook outlines the best practices for safely thawing frozen foods. It covers different methods and highlights important safety precautions to prevent foodborne illnesses.

### Step 1: Refrigerator Thawing

Place the frozen food in the refrigerator, ensuring that it is in a container or plastic bag to prevent cross-contamination. Allow for slow, safe thawing; typically, 24 hours for every 5 pounds of food.

### Step 2: Cold Water Thawing

Submerge the sealed food in cold tap water, changing the water every 30 minutes to continue safe thawing. Estimate roughly 30 minutes per pound of food for thawing time.

### Step 3: Microwave Thawing

Use the microwave’s defrost setting, if available, or set power to 50% for thawing. Plan to cook the food immediately after microwave thawing as some areas may begin to cook during the process.

### Step 4: Cook Without Thawing

If time does not allow for complete thawing, it’s safe to cook foods from a frozen state. Adjust cooking times accordingly, as cooking frozen food will require approximately 50% longer than the recommended time for fully thawed or fresh food.

## General Notes

### Temperature Monitoring

Always ensure that food reaches a safe internal temperature according to USDA guidelines to prevent foodborne illness.

### Avoiding Room Temperature

Never thaw food at room temperature, such as on the counter, because this promotes the growth of harmful bacteria.

### Cross-Contamination

Keep raw food separate from other foods during thawing to avoid cross-contamination.

### Frequent Water Changes

When using the cold water method, remember to change the water every 30 minutes to ensure the food remains at a safe temperature.

### Proper Packaging

Ensure that the food is properly sealed in a leak-proof package or plastic bag, especially when using the cold water method, to prevent bacteria from the surrounding environment from contaminating the food.