

# COOL FOODS QUICKLY AND SAFELY

- Cooling hot foods requires a two-stage process and takes a maximum of six hours:
  - **Stage 1:** 135°F to 70°F within the first 2 hours
  - **Stage 2:** 70°F to 41°F within the next 4 hours
- Ready-to-eat foods prepared from room temperature ingredients must be cooled to 41°F within 4 hours or use pre-chilled ingredients.

## Rapid Cooling Methods

### • **Shallow Metal Pans**

- Place product into pans in a single layer or with a depth of 2-4".
- Leave the pan uncovered until the product reaches 41°F.
- Refrigerate the product immediately.
- DO NOT stack hot pans: allow room for air flow.

### • **Ice Baths**

- Fill a clean sink or large pan with ice and cold water.
- Place the hot product in a metal container and place it inside the ice bath – make sure the ice bath is at the same level as the product!
- Stir the product every 10 minutes – use an ice paddle for stirring to reduce the cooling time.
- Replace the ice and water, if needed.
- When the product reaches 41°F, cover the container, label and date the product, and place it in the refrigerator.

### • **Small Portions**

- Divide into smaller, shallow metal pans.
- Product should be 2" deep for thicker products and 4" deep for thinner products.
- Cut or slice portions of meat no larger than 4" and place them in a single layer.
- Place into refrigeration and stir occasionally.

### • **Other Helpful Hints:**

- Metal containers help products cool much faster than plastic containers.
- When cooling in a refrigerator, always use the top shelf.
- Never cool products below 135°F at room temperature – place it in a refrigerator/freezer or an ice bath.
- Don't forget to label and date the product as soon as it is cooled to 41°F.
- Always use a clean thermometer to monitor the product temperature as it cools.
- Use cooling logs to record proper cooling temperatures.

