Correct use of refrigerators

HANDOUT
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MODULE 7

High-risk food should be stored under refrigeration

Clean - Cool - Covered

NB: The modern trend of not using preservatives means that some bottles or jars of food, once opened, have now to be stored in a refrigerator.

Rules for refrigerators:

- **Keep at correct temperature (1°C - 4°C recommended)**
- **Check dial temperature each time used and record at beginning and end of day (calibrated thermometer). Unless on automatic recording.**
- **Check temperature profiles of food (variation in temperatures)**
- **Practise stock rotation (FIFO)**
- **Do not overload. No food stored above or in front of, the load line.**
- **Defrost regularly (most are now automatic).**
- **No hot food that raises the temperature of food already stored in the refrigerator**
- **Do not open the door for longer than necessary**
- **Alarmed units (when temperature rises above, for example, 8°C) are recommended**
- **Separation of high-risk from raw food. Separate units preferable. Raw food always below ready-to-eat food and raw meat below salad/vegetables**
- **Keep clean and disinfected**
- **Protect salad, vegetables etc. from dripping blood**
- **Food should be covered, labelled and date coded where appropriate**
- **Site away from radiant heat sources. Good ventilation for motors**
- **Do not obstruct cooling units**
- **Easy clean construction**
- **No opened cans**
- **Maintain door seals**
- **Train staff appropriately**
- **Maintenance contract recommended**
- **Contingency plan in the event of breakdown/high temperatures**

Most pathogens do not grow below 5°C, but spoilage organisms do.