

READY TO EAT FOODS RTE'S

**Presentation by the PA Food
Safety Task Force**

READY TO EAT FOODS

- Ready to eat foods are food products that require no further processing to ensure their safety.
- They may or may not have been cooked: i.e. Fruits, sushi, some species of shellfish, spices.
- Foods such as luncheon meats, tuna salad, bakery products and cheeses are also considered RTE foods.

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- RTE's have been prepared according to Food Code requirements:
- From ingredients that have been pre-chilled and mixed-such as tuna salad.
- Food is cooked to a proper temperature and cooled down as prescribed in the Food Code- from 140°F-70°F in 2hrs.then 70°F-41°F in <4hrs.-chili and stored at 41 or 45°F.

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- RTE's should not be stored for more than 7 days if held at 41°F or 4 days at 45°F. This practice will help control the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*, a harmful bacteria.
- To keep track of the product a *date marking system* may be used.

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- Quiz time:
- Is chili in a walk-in cooler, at 41 or 45°F, that has been prepared and cooled meeting Food Code guidelines a RTE food?
- Are commercially prepared hot dogs a RTE food?
- Is sushi a RTE food?

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- Answers:
- Chili when prepared and held properly is a RTE food, although most people prefer it heated.
- Hot dogs are not a RTE food, they must reach an internal temperature of 155°F for 15 seconds prior to service.
- Sushi even when it contains raw fish is a RTE food.