

# What does FATTOM mean?

FATTOM is an acronym to enumerate the key factors contributing to pathogenic microorganisms' presence and growth rate in food.

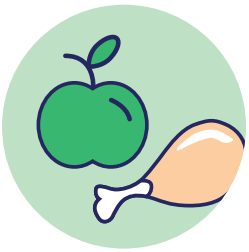


## Food

Foods rich in proteins and carbohydrates are more likely to be contaminated, spoiled, and cause foodborne illness.

### Preventive controls

- Use only high-quality and fresh ingredients
- Monitor the food storage conditions
- Immediately discard or isolate spoiled foods



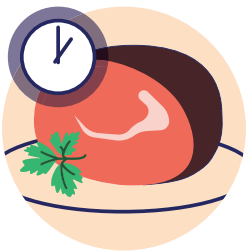
## Acid

Foods with very high or very low acidity or pH are less likely to be spoiled by common pathogens.

**Low-acid foods (pH > 4.6)** such as meat and poultry, are very prone to bacterial contamination. **High-acid foods (pH < 4.6)** such as fruits and fermented products, are generally more stable.

### Preventive controls

- Where applicable, increase the acidity of low-acid foods by adding organic acids
- Properly cook low-acid foods
- Accurately measure the pH of foods with pH strips or a pH meter

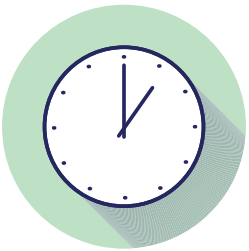


## Temperature

Avoid keeping foods in the **temperature danger zone** (5°C to 60°C), where the pathogens grow better. Cook foods to the recommended internal temperature.

### Preventive controls

- Use a calibrated thermometer to ensure that foods are cooked to the recommended internal temperature
- Avoid storing high-risk foods in the temperature danger zone
- Consistently maintain storage temperature for high-risk foods



## Time

All foods are perishable and have a definite shelf-life period.

### Preventive controls

- Throw foods that were exposed to the temperature danger zone for more than 4 hours
- Always monitor the shelf-life of food products
- Follow the recommended heating times for cooking or reheating food products



## Oxygen

Most foodborne pathogens require oxygen to support growth. Depending on the target pathogen to control, oxygen may be removed or added to food systems for control.

### Preventive controls

- Use airtight containers to keep excess oxygen out
- Where applicable, use oxygen scavengers
- Vacuum seal foods for long-term storage



## Moisture

Products with very high moisture and water activity are more likely to be contaminated and spoiled.

### Preventive controls

- Keep foods in airtight containers to prevent the absorption of moisture from the environment
- Keep high-risk foods in a dry place to avoid excess moisture
- Use moisture absorbers or desiccants to control the humidity in storage areas



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