Food Most Likely to Become Unsafe: TCS Food

Pathogens grow well in the food pictured below. It needs time and temperature control to limit this growth. For this reason, this food is called TCS food—food requiring time and temperature control for safety.

- Milk and dairy products

- Shell eggs (except those treated to eliminate *Salmonella* spp.)

- Meat: beef, pork, and lamb

- Poultry

- Fish

- Shellfish and crustaceans

- Baked potatoes

- Heat-treated plant food, such as cooked rice, beans, and vegetables

- Tofu or other soy protein
- Synthetic ingredients, such as textured soy protein in meat alternatives

- Sprouts and sprout seeds

- Sliced melons
- Cut tomatoes
- Cut leafy greens

- Untreated garlic-and-oil mixtures

Like TCS food, ready-to-eat food also needs careful handling to prevent contamination. Ready-to-eat food is exactly what it sounds like: food that can be eaten without further preparation, washing, or cooking. Ready-to-eat food includes cooked food, washed fruit and vegetables (whole and cut), and deli meat. Bakery items and sugar, spices, and seasonings are also included.