



### Case of the Melting Cube

**Goal:** To help children understand why it's important to keep frozen foods frozen until you are ready to prepare them.

**Background Information:** Thawing commercially frozen foods improperly can affect their quality and consistency and allow bacteria to grow.

**Share these tips with your children:**

- Select packages that are clean and firm.
- Buy only ice-free, undamaged packages.
- Make the frozen food aisle the last stop before leaving the store.
- Pack all frozen food items together to help maintain their cold temperature.
- Return home immediately and store all frozen items in your freezer.
- Label and date all purchases.
- After frozen food has thawed, use it immediately or discard it.

**You'll Need:** ice cubes; plastic containers; insulating materials such as newspaper, fabric scraps, plastic bags, cardboard, foil, foam peanuts, etc.; and [Reproducible Panel 1](#).

**Activity:** Read the Cool Clues on [Reproducible Panel 1](#). Then help children perform the simple experiments as described in each clue. Discuss the findings. Next, have children try different insulating materials. Encourage them to notice packing materials manufacturers use to help keep foods frozen between the store and home.

## Kid's Section

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## Scrambled Safety Tips

### Goal:

To help children and their families become aware of the safe handling of raw and thawed foods.

### Background Information:

Share this information about the safe handling and preparation of raw and thawed foods with your children:

- Wash hands with hot, soapy water before and after handling foods.
- Store raw meat, poultry and seafood on the bottom shelf in the refrigerator to prevent juices from dripping.
- Wash cutting boards and tools before and after food preparation.
- Use the refrigerator, cold water, or the microwave to thaw frozen foods.
- Refrigerate or freeze prepared foods within two hours.

**You'll Need:** [Reproducible Panel 2](#); a large bowl; a frying pan; a spatula; a spoon; a cutting board; a handful of play clay ("raw meat"); a plastic bag full of green shredded paper ("salad greens"); plastic wash basin; sponge; empty dish soap bottle; hand soap.

**Activity:** Print out and read [Reproducible Panel 2](#). Ask children to follow the instructions on the page and then to share their results. The correct order, if burgers are made first, is: Wash hands; Start with a clean spoon and bowl to mix meat; Wash a cutting board; Shape burgers on the cutting board; Wash the bowl and all the tools you've used; Wash hands; While the burgers cook, use the clean bowl and tools to make a salad.

Children can then take turns demonstrating the safe preparation of a meal of "burgers" and "salad." Share Mini-Mystery 2 with the rest of the family.