



SAFELY STORE FOODS IN THE REFRIGERATOR AND FREEZER

Refrigerators and freezers are used to prevent the growth of bacteria on foods you intend to eat at a later time or date. In order for your refrigerator and freezer to perform their function correctly there are certain things that you must do.

- Refrigerator and freezer temperatures should be checked each day to be sure they are cold enough. This can be done by using an appliance thermometer similar to the one pictured to the side. Refrigerators should be between 32°F and 40°F, while freezers should be 0°F or below.



Tips For Keeping Your Refrigerator And Freezer Cold

- Don't pack the refrigerator too full. Cold air must be able to circulate to keep food cold.
- Keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. Know what you want to get out before you open the door.
- Be sure the door seals are tight.
- Clean the coils of the refrigerator at least once a month.
- Don't put the refrigerator next to the oven or by a window where the sun comes in. This will cause it to be warmer.

- The way you store your food in the refrigerator is also important.
 - Raw meat, poultry, and seafood should be stored on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator. Have a plate or a pan under them to catch any juices that may drip.
 - Do not place raw fruits and vegetables or ready to eat foods next to or below raw meat, poultry, or seafood.
 - Keep eggs in the carton.
 - Do not store milk on the door. That is the warmest part of the refrigerator.
- Storage Times For Cold Foods
 - Recommended maximum storage times for cold foods have been developed. However, remember that these times are mostly freshness dates. The temperature of the refrigerator and the number of times the product is taken out of the refrigerator, opened and replaced will have an impact on the quality of the product.
 - Label foods with the date packages are opened when possible.
 - Check the refrigerator at least once a week for outdated foods. If you don't know how long a food has been in the refrigerator, it is best to throw it out.
 - The next page contains the recommended storage times for foods commonly found in your refrigerator and freezer.

Storage Times for Foods in the Refrigerator or Freezer

	Refrigerator (40° F, 4.4°C)	Freezer (0°F, -18°C)
<u>Salads</u>		
Egg, chicken, ham, tuna, & macaroni salads	3-5 days	Does not freeze well
<u>Hot Dogs</u>		
Opened package	1 week	1-2 months
Unopened package	2 weeks	1-2 months
<u>Luncheon Meats</u>		
Opened package or deli sliced	3-5 days	1-2 months
Unopened package	2 weeks	1-2 months
<u>Bacon & Sausage</u>		
Bacon	7 days	1 month
Sausage, raw - from chicken, turkey, pork, beef	1-2 days	1-2 months
<u>Hamburger & Other Ground Meats</u>		
Hamburger, ground beef, turkey, veal, pork, lamb, & mixtures of them	1-2 days	3-4 months
<u>Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb, & Pork</u>		
Steaks	3-5 days	6-12 months
Chops	3-5 days	4-6 months
Roasts	3-5 days	4-12 months
<u>Fresh Poultry</u>		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1-2 days	1 year
Chicken or turkey, pieces	1-2 days	9 months
<u>Soups & Stews</u>		
Vegetable or meat added	3-4 days	2-3 months
<u>Leftovers</u>		
Cooked meat or poultry	3-4 days	2-6 months
Chicken nuggets or patties	3-4 days	1-3 months
Pizza	3-4 days	1-2 months

Adapted from <http://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/charts/storagetimes.html>

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. What is the **best** way to find out what the temperature is inside of your refrigerator?
 - A. Feel how cold the items are in the refrigerator
 - B. Look at an appliance thermometer
 - C. Open the door and let the cold air hit your face
 - D. Check the temperature dial found in the refrigerator
2. It is important that you **do not** pack your refrigerator too full. Cold air need to be able to move around your refrigerated items.
 - A. True
 - B. False
3. Raw meat, poultry, and seafood should be stored on the _____ of the refrigerator.
 - A. Top Shelf
 - B. Middle Shelf
 - C. Bottom Shelf
 - D. Door
4. The _____ is the **warmest** part of the refrigerator.
 - A. Top Shelf
 - B. Middle Shelf
 - C. Bottom Shelf
 - D. Door
5. How long can you store leftover chicken in the refrigerator?
 - A. 3-4 days
 - B. 5-6 days
 - C. 1-2 weeks
 - D. 1-2 months

1. B
2. A
3. C
4. D
5. A

ANSWERS

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