

Food Handlers' Storage Guide

General guidelines for the shelf life of common foods. Read the label and check “best before” dates if applicable. Most foods are safe to eat if stored longer, but flavour and nutritional value will deteriorate. Discard if there is evidence of spoilage.

Refrigerator (4°C, 40°F)

Unless otherwise specified, cover all foods.

DAIRY PRODUCTS AND EGGS

(check “best before” dates)

Butter - unopened 8 weeks
- opened 3 weeks

Cheese - cottage (once opened) 3 days
- firm several months
- processed (unopened) several months
- processed (opened) 3-4 weeks

Margarine - unopened 8 months
- opened 1 month

Milk, cream, yogurt (once opened) 3 days

DELI AND VACUUM-PACKED PRODUCTS

Store prepared (or homemade)

Egg, chicken, tuna, ham,
macaroni salads 2-3 days

Stuffed pork, stuffed lamb chops,
stuffed chicken breasts 1 day

Store-cooked convenience meals 1-2 days

Commercial brand vacuum-packed
dinners (unopened) 2 weeks

EGGS

Fresh, in shell 3 weeks

Raw yolks, whites 2-4 days

Hard, cooked 1 week

Liquid pasteurized eggs or egg substitute
- opened 3 days
- unopened 10 days

FISH AND SHELLFISH

Clams, crab, lobster, mussels (live) 12-24 hours

Fish (cleaned) - raw 3-4 days
- cooked 1-2 days

Oysters (live) 24 hours

Scallops, shrimp (raw) 1-2 days

Shellfish (cooked) 1-2 days

FRESH FRUIT (RIPE)

Apples 2 months
- purchased February to July 2 weeks

Apricots (store uncovered) 1 week

Blueberries (store uncovered) 1 week

Cherries 3 days

Cranberries (store uncovered) 1 week

Grapes 5 days

Peaches (store uncovered) 1 week

Pears (store uncovered) 1 week

Plums 5 days

Raspberries (store uncovered) 2 days

Rhubarb 1 week

Strawberries (store uncovered) 2 days

FRESH VEGETABLES

Asparagus 5 days

Beans (green, wax) 5 days

Beets 3-4 weeks

Broccoli 3 days

Brussels sprouts 1 week

Cabbage 2 weeks

Carrots several weeks

Cauliflower 10 days

Celery 2 weeks

Corn use same day

Cucumbers 1 week

Lettuce 1 week

Mushrooms 5 days

Onions (green) 1 week

Parsnips several weeks

Peas use same day

Peppers (green, red) 1 week

Potatoes (new) 1 week

Spinach 2 days

Sprouts 2 days

Squash (summer) 1 week

MEAT, POULTRY

Uncooked

Chops, steaks 2-3 days

Cured or smoked meat 6-7 days

Ground turkey, veal, pork, lamb 1-2 days

Hamburger, ground and stewed meats 1-2 days

Poultry 2-3 days

Roasts 3-4 days

Variety meats, giblets 1-2 days

Cooked

All meats and poultry 3-4 days

Casseroles, meat pies, meat sauces 2-3 days

Soups and stews (vegetable or meat) 3-4 days

Other

Hot dogs - opened package 1 week
- unopened package 2 weeks

Lunch meats - opened package 3-5 days
- unopened package 2 weeks

MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Coffee (ground) 2 months

Mayonnaise, salad dressings, commercial
(refrigerate once opened) 2 months

Nuts 4 months

Shortening 12 months

Whole wheat flour 3 months

Freezer (-18°C, 0°F)

Use freezer wrapping or airtight containers. Freeze fresh food at its peak condition.

DAIRY PRODUCTS AND FATS

Butter - salted 1 year
- unsalted 3 months

Cheese - firm, processed 3 months

Cream - table, whipping
(separates when thawed) 1 month

Ice cream 1 month

Margarine 6 months

Milk 6 weeks

FISH AND SHELLFISH

Fish (fat species: lake trout, mackerel,
salmon) 2 months

Fish (lean species: cod, haddock,
pike, smelt) 6 months

Shellfish 2-4 months

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

MEAT, POULTRY AND EGGS

Uncooked

Beef (roasts, steaks) 10-12 months

Chicken, turkey - cut up 6 months
- whole 1 year

Cured or smoked meat 1-2 months

Duck, goose 3 months

Eggs - raw yolks, whites 4 months
- liquid pasteurized eggs or
egg substitute - unopened 4 months
- fresh in shell DO NOT FREEZE

Hamburger, ground and stew meats 3-4 months

Lamb (chops, roasts) 8-12 months

Pork (chops, roasts) 8-12 months

Sausages, wieners 2-3 months

Variety meats, giblets 3-4 months

Veal (chops, roasts) 8-12 months

Cooked

All meat 2-3 months

All poultry 1-3 months

TV dinners, casseroles, meat pies
(all brands) 3-4 months

Soups and stews - vegetable and
meat added 2-3 months

Other

Hot dogs - opened/unopened
package 1-2 months

Lunch meats - opened/unopened
package 1-2 months

MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Bean, lentil, pea casseroles 3-6 months

Breads (baked or unbaked, yeast) 1 month

Cakes, cookies (baked) 4 months

Herbs 1 year

Pastries, quick bread (baked) 1 month

Pastry crust (unbaked) 2 months

Pie (fruit, unbaked) 6 months

Sandwiches 6 weeks

Soups (cream) 4 months

Cupboard (room temperature)

Unless otherwise specified, times apply to unopened packages.

CEREAL GRAINS

(once opened, store in airtight containers, away from light and heat)

Bread crumbs (dry) 3 months

Cereals (ready-to-eat) 8 months

Cornmeal 6-8 months

Crackers 6 months

Pasta several years

Rice several years

Rollled oats 6-10 months

White flour 1 year

Whole wheat flour 3 months

CANNED FOODS

(once opened, store covered in airtight container in refrigerator)

Evaporated milk 9-12 months

Other canned foods 1 year

DRY FOODS

(once opened, store in airtight containers, away from light and heat)

Baking powder, baking soda 1 year

Beans, peas, lentils 1 year

Chocolate (baking) 7 months

Cocoa 10-12 months

Coffee (ground) 1 month

Coffee (instant) 1 year

Coffee whitener 6 months

Fruit (dried) 1 year

Gelatin 1 year

Jelly powder 2 years

Mixes (cake, pancake, tea biscuit) 1 year

Mixes (pie filling and pudding) 18 months

Mixes (main dish accompaniments) 9-12 months

Potatoes (flakes) 1 year

Skim milk powder - unopened 1 year
- opened 1 month

Sugar (all types) several years

Tea bags 1 year

MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Honey 18 months

Jam, jellies (once opened, store covered
in refrigerator) 1 year

Mayonnaise, salad dressings
- unopened 6 months

Molasses 2 years

Nuts 1 month

Peanut butter - unopened 6 months
- opened 2 months

Pectin - liquid 1 year
- opened (store covered
in refrigerator) 1 month
- powdered 2 years

Sandwich spread (once opened, store
covered in refrigerator) 8 months

Syrups - corn, maple, table 1 year

Vegetable oils (once opened, store covered
in refrigerator) 1 year

Vinegar several years

Yeast (dry) 1 year

VEGETABLES

Potatoes, rutabaga, squash 1 week

Tomatoes 1 week

Cool room (7-10°C, 45-50°F)

Onions (dry, yellow skin) 6 weeks

Potatoes (mature) 6 months

Rutabaga (waxed) several months

Squash (winter) several months



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