



SAFE FOOD \$ENSE

At the Store

Save grocery shopping for last on your to-do list. Shop for cold foods last and get it home fast.

Never leave food in a hot car; this will cause food spoilage bacteria to grow. The temperature danger zone for potentially dangerous foods is 40° to 140°. Do not buy foods in containers that are leaking or bulging; or damaged cans, cracked jars, or jars with loose or bulging lids. These foods could contain the rare and often fatal botulism poison.

Don't buy anything you won't use by the expiration or use-by date. Make sure refrigerated food is cold to the touch. Frozen foods should be rock solid. Bring an ice chest for cold foods if it takes you more than 30 minutes to get from the store to your house.

In the Kitchen

Make sure your refrigerator is cooling between 35° and 40°. Store foods in your refrigerator so that cold air can circulate around them. Wrap raw meats in plastic and place them on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator to keep juices from dripping onto other foods.

Freeze fresh meats immediately if you do not plan to use them within a few days. Deli meats, beefsteaks, roasts, and poultry should be used within 4 to 5 days. Ground meats and fish should be used within 1 to 2 days.

First in, first out (FIFO) is a method of rotation in which new foods are placed on the shelves behind old foods, so the old foods are used first. This method is used to make sure that food is used before or on the use-by date.

Wash your hands with hot, soapy water

for at least 20 seconds before you handle food. Be sure to cover any cuts on your hands with a bandage, or wear plastic gloves. Avoid cross-contamination by washing hands, cutting boards, and other surfaces after handling raw meat, fish, and poultry. Also, wash your hands thoroughly after using the bathroom, coughing, sneezing, changing a baby's diaper, or touching any pet.

Consider using paper towels for cleaning kitchen surfaces. Cloth towels may contain bacteria and should be washed often in the hot cycle of your washing machine.

Thaw food in a microwave or refrigerator. Do not leave food out at room temperature. Immediately finish cooking foods you have thawed in the microwave. Marinate meats in plastic or glass covered containers in the refrigerator.

While Cooking

Use a thermometer when cooking meat, fish, poultry, or any casserole. Meat, fish, poultry, and eggs should be cooked thoroughly to kill harmful bacteria. Refer to the chart on page 2 for internal cooking temperatures.

All canned and frozen vegetables should be boiled at a rolling boil for 10 minutes. Don't cook foods that have an off-odor or discoloration because these are signs the food is spoiled.

Be careful not to spread germs from raw meat to cooked meat. Use separate platters for raw and cooked meats. Otherwise, there will be germs on your cooked food.

Cutting boards should be washed and sanitized between uses to prevent cross-contamination. Use a good dishwashing detergent, hot water, and a chlorine bleach solution for thorough cleaning.

Appropriate Internal Cooking Temperatures

Product	Temperature
Egg dishes, casseroles	160 °F
Ground beef, pork, & meat mixtures	160 °F
Ground turkey & chicken	165 °F
Fresh beef, veal, lamb, cooked medium	160 °F
Fresh beef, veal, lamb, cooked well-done	170 °F
Whole poultry and poultry parts	165 °F
Fresh pork, medium	165 °F
Fresh pork, well-done	170 °F
Fresh ham	160 °F
Precooked ham, to reheat	140 °F
Leftovers and casseroles	165 °F

While Serving

Use clean dishes and utensils to serve food, not those used in preparation. Serve grilled food on a clean plate, too, not one that held raw meat, poultry, or fish.

Never leave perishable food out of the refrigerator more than 2 hours! Bacteria that can cause food poisoning grow quickly at warm temperatures.

Pack lunches in an insulated carrier with a cold pack. Tell children never to leave lunches in direct sun or on a warm radiator.

Carry picnic food in a cooler with a cold pack. When possible, put the cooler in the shade. Keep the lid on as much as you can.

Party time? Keep cold party food on ice or serve it throughout the gathering from platters from the refrigerator. Likewise, divide hot party food into smaller serving platters. Keep platters refrigerated until it's time to warm them up for serving.

With Leftovers

When you cook ahead, divide large portions of food into small, shallow containers for refrigeration. This ensures safe, quick cooling. When reheating, bring sauces, soups, and gravies to a boil. Other leftovers should be heated to 165°. When using a microwave to reheat, cover food with a vented plastic wrap and rotate for thorough heating.

For freezer storage, use foil, freezer wrap, freezer containers, or vapor-proof plastic bags. Date food packages and use before the expiration date to ensure good quality. Make sure your freezer stays at 0°. Refer to the chart on page 3 for storage times.

Store leftovers in the refrigerator at a temperature of 40°F or below. Leftovers should be eaten within 3-4 days. Never taste food that looks or smells strange to see if you can still use it. **When in doubt, throw it out!**

Store dry foods such as rice and beans in a cool, dry area in canisters or tightly sealed containers away from hazardous materials like cleaning and pest control products.

Frozen Food Storage Chart

Ground beef, lamb, veal, or pork	3-4 months
Beef, pork, or venison roasts	4-12 months
Beef, pork, or venison steaks	6-12 months
Ground venison	2-3 months
Shrimp in shell, uncooked	6-12 months
Shrimp, peeled	3-6 months
Fresh chicken, duck, or turkey pieces	9 months
Chicken livers	3 months
Sausage, raw	1-2 months
Cooked meat and meat casseroles	2-3 months
Cooked poultry casseroles	4-6 months



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