

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.



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 mo
Cereals (ready-to-eat).....8 mo
Cornmeal.....6-8 mo
Crackers.....6 mo
Pasta.....several yr.
Rice.....several yr.
Rolled oats.....6-10 mo
White flour.....1 yr.
Whole wheat flour.....3 mo

CANNED FOODS

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

Evaporated milk.....9-12 mo
Other canned foods.....1 yr.

DRY FOODS

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

Baking powder, baking soda.....1 yr.
Beans, peas, lentils.....1 yr.
Chocolate (baking).....7 mo
Cocoa.....10-12 mo
Coffee (ground).....1 mo
Coffee (instant).....1 yr.
Coffee whitener.....6 mo
Fruit (dried).....1 yr.
Gelatin.....1 yr.
Jelly powder.....2 yr.
Mixes (cake, pancake, and biscuit).....1 yr.
Mixes (pie filling and pudding).....18 mo
Mixes (main dish accompaniments).....9-12 mo
Potatoes (flakes).....1 yr.

Skim milk powder
- unopened.....1 yr.
- opened.....1 mo
Sugar (all types).....several yr.
Tea bags.....1 yr.

MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Honey.....18 mo
Jam, jellies
(once opened, covered in fridge).....1 yr.
Mayonnaise, salad dressings
- unopened.....6 mo
- opened (covered in fridge).....1-2 mo
Molasses.....2 yr.
Nuts.....1 mo
Peanut butter
- unopened.....6 mo
- opened.....2 mo
Pectin - liquid.....1 yr.
- opened (covered in fridge).....1 mo
- powdered.....2 yr.

Sandwich spread
(once opened, covered in fridge).....8 mo
Syrups - corn, maple, table.....1 yr.
Vegetable oils
(once opened, covered in fridge).....1 yr.
Vinegar.....several yr.
Yeast (dry).....1 yr.

VEGETABLES

Potatoes, rutabaga, squash.....1 wk
Tomatoes.....1 wk
Cool room (7-10°C, 45-50°F)
Onions (dry, yellow skin).....6 wk
Potatoes (mature).....6 mo
Rutabaga (waxed).....several mo
Squash (winter).....several mo

Refrigerator (4°C, 40°F)

Unless otherwise specified, cover all foods.

DAIRY PRODUCTS & EGGS

(check "best before" dates)

Butter
- unopened.....8 wk
- opened.....3 wk
Cheese
- cottage (opened).....3 days
- firm.....several mo
- processed (unopened).....several mo
- processed (opened).....3-4 wk
Eggs.....3 wk
Margarine
- unopened.....8 mo
- opened.....1 mo
Milk, cream, yogurt (opened).....3 days

FISH AND SHELLFISH

Clams, crab, lobster, and mussels (live).....12-24 hr
Fish (cleaned)
- raw.....3-4 days
- cooked.....1-2 days
Oysters (live).....24 hr

Scallops, shrimp (raw).....1-2 days
Shellfish (cooked).....1-2 days

FRESH FRUIT (RIPE)

Apples.....2 mo
- purchased February to July.....2 wk
Apricots (store uncovered).....1 wk
Blueberries (store uncovered).....1 wk
Cherries.....3 days
Cranberries (store uncovered).....1 wk
Grapes.....5 days
Peaches (store uncovered).....1 wk
Pears (store uncovered).....1 wk
Plums.....5 days
Raspberries (store uncovered).....2 days
Rhubarb.....1 wk
Strawberries (store uncovered).....2 days

FRESH VEGETABLES

Asparagus.....5 days
Beans (green, wax).....5 days

Beets.....3-4 wk
Broccoli.....3 days
Brussels sprouts.....1 wk
Cabbage.....2 wk
Carrots.....several wk
Cauliflower.....10 days
Celery.....2 wk
Corn.....use same day
Cucumbers.....1 wk
Lettuce.....1 wk
Mushrooms.....5 days
Onions (green).....1 wk
Parsnips.....several wk
Peas.....use same day
Peppers (green, red, etc.).....1 wk
Potatoes (new).....1 wk
Spinach.....2 days
Sprouts.....2 days
Squash (summer).....1 wk

MEAT & POULTRY

Uncooked
Chops, steaks.....2-3 days
Cured or smoked meat.....6-7 days
Ground meat.....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, and meat sauces.....2-3 days
Soups.....2-3 days

MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Coffee (ground).....2 mo
Nuts.....4 mo
Shortening.....12 mo
Whole wheat flour.....3 mo

Freezer (-18°C, 0°F)

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

DAIRY PRODUCTS & FATS

Butter
- salted.....1 yr.
- unsalted.....3 mo
Cheese - firm, processed.....3 mo
Cream - table, whipping (separates when thawed).....1 mo
Ice cream.....1 mo
Margarine.....6 mo
Milk.....6 wk

FISH AND SHELLFISH

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

Fish (lean species: cod, haddock, pike, smelt).....6 mo
Shellfish.....2-4 mo

FRUITS & VEGETABLES

.....1 yr.

MEAT, POULTRY, & EGGS

Uncooked
Beef (roasts, steaks).....10-12 mo
Chicken, turkey
- cut up.....6 mo
- whole.....1 yr.
Cured or smoked meat.....1-2 mo
Duck, goose.....3 mo

Eggs (whites, yolks).....4 mo
Ground meat.....2-3 mo
Lamb (chops, roasts).....8-12 mo
Pork (chops, roasts).....8-12 mo
Sausages, wieners.....2-3 mo
Variety meats, giblets.....3-4 mo
Veal (chops, roasts).....8-12 mo
Cooked
All meat.....2-3 mo
All poultry.....1-3 mo
Casseroles, meat pies.....3 mo

MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Bean, lentil, pea casseroles.....3-6 mo
Breads (baked or unbaked, yeast).....1 mo
Cakes, cookies (baked).....4 mo
Herbs.....1 yr.
Pastries, quick bread (baked).....1 mo
Pastry crust (unbaked).....2 mo
Pie (fruit, unbaked).....6 mo
Sandwiches.....6 wk
Soups (stocks, cream).....4 mo

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