

## Refrigerator and Freezer Storage

### General Tips

- If a food has a “use by” date, eat the food by that date for the best quality.
- Buy foods before their “sell-by” date if they have one.
- Use storage times in the chart below for cooking and freezing foods with a “sell-by” date or no date.
- Marinate foods in the refrigerator, not on the counter.
- Store leftovers in airtight containers.
- Refrigerate food right after buying if perishable. Freeze it if you can’t use it within the time listed on the chart below.

Keep your food safe in the refrigerator by using the time limits below. The freezer time limits are for the best quality and taste.

	Refrigerator (40°F)	Freezer (0°F)
<b>Leftovers</b>		
Cooked meat, meat dishes, soups, stews and vegetables	3-4 days	2-3 months
Gravy & meat broth	1-2 days	2-3 months
Cooked poultry & fish	3-4 days	4-6 months
<b>Eggs</b>		
Fresh, in shell	4-5 weeks	Don't freeze
Hard cooked	1 week	Doesn't freeze well
Egg substitutes, opened	3 days	Don't freeze
Egg substitutes, unopened	10 days	1 year
Mayonnaise, store bought	2 months	Don't freeze
<b>Deli Foods</b>		
Store-prepared or homemade salads (macaroni, tuna, egg salad, etc.)	3-5 days	Doesn't freeze well
Pre-stuffed pork chops, stuffed chicken breasts	1 day	Doesn't freeze well
Store-cooked convenience meals	3-4 days	Doesn't freeze well

	Refrigerator (40°F)	Freezer (0°F) (in freezer wrap)
<b>Hot Dogs &amp; Luncheon Meats</b>		
Hot dogs, opened package	1 week	1-2 months
unopened package	2 weeks	1-2 months
Lunch meats, opened	3-5 days	1-2 months
unopened	2 weeks	1-2 months
<b>TV Dinners, Frozen Casseroles</b>		
Keep frozen until ready to heat		3-4 months
<b>Fresh Meat (Beef, Pork, Veal, &amp; Lamb)</b>		
Steaks	3-5 days	6-12 months
Chops	3-5 days	4-6 months
Roasts	3-5 days	4-12 months
Variety meats (tongue, kidneys, liver, heart, chitterlings)	1-2 days	3-4 months
Hamburger, ground meats & stew meats	1-2 days	3-4 months
<b>Fresh Poultry</b>		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1-2 days	1 year
Chicken or turkey pieces	1-2 days	9 months
Giblets	1-2 days	3-4 months
<b>Fresh Fish</b>		
Lean fish, shell fish (cod, flounder, shrimp, etc.)	1-2 days	3-6 months
Fatty fish (salmon, etc.)	1-2 days	2-3 months
<i>After opening</i>	<i>Out of can</i>	
Canned Fish (keep in pantry until opened)	3-4 days	2 months
Smoked Fish	14 days	2 months

	Refrigerator (40°F)	Freezer (0°F)
<b>Ham</b>		
Canned ham (label says “keep refrigerated”), unopened	6-9 months	Don’t freeze
Canned ham, opened	3-5 days	1-2 days
Ham, fully cooked, whole	1 week	1-2 months
Ham, fully cooked (half & slices)	3-5 days	1-2 months

## Bacon & Sausage

Bacon	1 week	1 month
Sausage, raw (pork, beef or turkey)	1-2 days	1-2 months
Pre-cooked smoked breakfast links/patties	1 week	1-2 months

## Fresh Produce

- Some fresh fruits and vegetables (such as berries, lettuce, herbs and mushrooms) keep best by storing in the fridge. If you are uncertain whether an item should be refrigerated, ask your grocer.
- All produce purchased pre-cut or peeled should be refrigerated for safety and quality.
- Produce cut or peeled at home should be refrigerated within two hours.
- Wash all produce under cold running water before peeling, cutting, or eating.

*\*Adapted from the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) resources*