



STORAGE GUIDELINES

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For best results in maintaining product quality, practice the rule: **FIRST IN, FIRST OUT**. This means you use the oldest products first and the newest products later. A good practice in the home is to place the newly purchased products in back of the same products already on the shelf. It may help to write purchase dates on product packages. Follow recommended storage times for the refrigerator, freezer and pantry.

- Storage areas near oven ranges, hot water pipes or heating ducts should not be used because heat and moisture can cause a food to lose its quality more rapidly.
- Insect infestation can occur in any home. Susceptible foods include cereals, flour, seeds, baking mixes, spices, candy, dried fruits and dry pet foods. Avoid purchasing damaged packages of foods and keep cupboard shelves clean. Storing food in tightly sealed glass, metal or rigid plastic containers may help.
- High temperature or humidity may reduce storage time considerably.
- Pantry foods will probably be safe beyond recommended storage time, but eating quality (flavor and texture) and nutritive value will be reduced.

Canned & Dried Foods

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Canned Foods – Unopened	12 months	Keep cool
Canned Fruit Juices	9 months	Keep cool
Canned Foods – Opened	2 – 3 days	Refrigerate & cover tightly
Fish & Seafood	2 days	
Fruit	1 week	
Meats	2 days	Refrigerate & cover tightly
Pickles, Olives	1 – 2 months	
Poultry	2 days	
Sauce, Tomato	5 days	
Vegetables	3 days	

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University of Arkansas, United States Department of Agriculture and County Governments Cooperating

Canned & Dried Foods Continued

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Fruits, Dried	6 months – 1 year	Keep cool in airtight container
Vegetables, Dried	6 months – 1 year	

Mixed & Packaged Foods

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Biscuit, Brownie, Muffin Mix	9 months	Keep cool and dry
Cakes, Purchased	1 – 2 days	Refrigerate
Cake Mixes	9 months	Keep cool and dry
Cake, Angel Food	12 months	
Casseroles, Mix	9 – 12 months	Keep cool and dry
Cookies, Homemade	2 – 3 weeks	Store in airtight container
Cookies, Packaged	2 months	Keep box tightly closed
Crackers	8 months	Keep box tightly closed
Frosting, Canned – Opened	3 months	Refrigerate
Frosting, Mix	8 months	
Pancake Mix	6 – 9 months	Store in airtight container
Pies & Pastries with Whipped Cream, Custard, Chiffon Fills	2 – 3 days	Refrigerate
Potatoes, Instant	6 – 12 months	Keep in airtight package
Pudding Mixes	12 months	Keep cool and dry
Rice, Mixes	6 months	Keep cool and dry
Sauce and Gravy Mixes	6 – 12 months	Keep cool and dry
Soup Mixes	12 months	Keep cool and dry
Toaster Pastries	2 – 3 months	Keep in airtight package

Spices, Herbs, Condiments & Extracts

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Catsup, Chili Sauce – Unopened	12 months	Refrigerate for longer storage
Catsup, Chili Sauce – Opened	1 month	
Mustard, Yellow – Prepared – Unopened	2 years	May be refrigerated

Spices, Herbs, Condiments & Extracts

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Mustard, Yellow – Prepared – Opened	6 – 8 months	
Spices and Herbs, Whole Spices	1 – 2 years	Store in airtight container
Spices and Herbs, Dry Ground	6 months	Store in airtight container
Herbs	6 months	
Herb/Spice Blend	6 months	
Vanilla Extracts – Unopened	2 years	Keep tightly closed
Vanilla Extracts – Opened	12 months	Store on shelf
Vegetables, Dehydrated Flakes	6 months	Store on shelf

Staples

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Baking Powder	18 months maximum	Store dry and covered
Baking Soda	2 years	Store dry and covered
Bouillon Cubes or Granules	2 years	Store dry and covered
Bread Crumbs, Dried	6 months	Store dry and covered
Cereal – Ready-to-Eat – Unopened	6 – 12 months	
Cereal – Ready-to-Eat – Opened	2 – 3 months	Re-fold package tightly
Cereal – Cooked	6 months	
Chocolate	12 months	Keep cool
Chocolate – Semi-Sweet	2 years	Keep cool
Chocolate – Unsweetened	18 months	Keep cool
Chocolate Syrup – Unopened	2 years	
Chocolate Syrup – Opened	6 months	Refrigerate
Cocoa Mixes	8 months	
Coffee Can – Unopened	2 years	
Coffee Can – Opened	6 months	Keep tightly closed
Coffee – Instant – Unopened	1 – 2 years	
Coffee – Instant – Opened	2 weeks	
Coffee Whitener – Dry – Unopened	9 months	
Coffee Whitener – Dry – Opened	6 months	Keep tightly closed

Staples Continued

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Cornmeal	12 months	Keep tightly closed
Cornstarch	18 months	Store in airtight container
Flour – White	6 – 8 months	Store in airtight container
Flour – Whole Wheat	6 – 8 months	Refrigerate
Gelatin	18 months	Store in original container
Grits	12 months	Store in airtight container
Honey	12 months	Store refrigerated
Jellies, Jams – Opened	12 months	Store refrigerated
Molasses – Unopened	12 months	
Molasses – Opened	6 months	Refrigerate
Marshmallow Cream – Unopened	3 – 4 months	Refrigerate
Mayonnaise – Unopened	2 – 3 months	Refrigerate after opening
Milk – Condensed/ Evaporated – Unopened	12 months	Invert cans every 2 months
Milk – Condensed/Evaporated – Opened	3 months	Store in airtight container
Pasta – Spaghetti, Macaroni	2 years	Store in airtight container
Pectin – Liquid – Opened	1 month	Refrigerate
Rice – White	2 years	Keep tightly closed
Rice, Flavored or Herb	6 months	
Salad Dressings – Bottled – Unopened	10 – 12 months	Store on shelf
Salad Dressings – Made from Mix	2 weeks	Refrigerate after mixing
Salad Oils – Unopened	6 months	Store on shelf
Salad Oils – Opened	1 – 3 months	Refrigerate after opening
Shortening – Solid	8 months	
Sugar, Brown	4 months	Store in airtight container
Sugar, Confectioners	18 months	Store in airtight container
Sugar, Granulated	2 years	Cover tightly
Artificial Sweeteners	2 years	Cover tightly
Syrups	12 months	Refrigerate after opening
Tea – Bags	18 months	Store in airtight container
Tea – Instant	3 years	Cover tightly
Tea – Loose	2 years	Store in airtight container
Vinegar – Unopened	2 years	Cover tightly

Others

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Coconut – Shredded, Canned or Packed – Unopened	12 months	Store on shelf
Meat Substitute	4 months	Keep tightly closed
Nuts – In Shell – Unopened	4 months	Refrigerate after opening
Nutmeats – Packaged – Unopened	4 months	Freeze for longer storage
Nuts, Vacuum Canned	1 year	
Nutmeats	2 weeks	
Peanut Butter – Unopened	6 – 9 months	
Peanut Butter – Opened	2 – 3 months	Keeps longer if refrigerated
Peas, Beans – Dried	12 months	Store in airtight container
Popcorn	2 years	Store in airtight container
Vegetables – Fresh Onions	2 weeks	Keep dry, away from sun
Vegetables – Fresh White Potatoes	2 weeks	Keep at 50°F.
Vegetables – Fresh Sweet Potatoes	2 weeks	Don't refrigerate

This chart originated from Consumer Marketing Information, Cooperative Extension Service, University of Illinois, E. Lansing, MI

Storage Times for Refrigerated Foods

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Eggs – Fresh – In-Shell	3 – 5 weeks	
Eggs – Raw Yolks, Whites	2 – 4 days	
Eggs – Hard Cooked	1 week	
Liquid Pasteurized Eggs – Egg Substitutes – Unopened	10 days	
Liquid Pasteurized Eggs – Egg Substitutes – Opened	3 days	
Cooked Egg Dishes	3 – 4 days	
Mayonnaise – Opened	2 months	
Deli and Vacuum-Packed Products		
Store-Prepared or Homemade Egg, Chicken, Tuna, Ham, & Macaroni Salads	3 – 5 days	
Pre-Stuffed Pork, Lamb Chops, and Chicken Breasts	1 day	

Storage Times for Refrigerated Foods Continued

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	NOTES
Deli and Vacuum-Packed Products		
Store-Cooked Dinners and Entrees	3 – 4 days	
Commercial brand Vacuum-Packed Dinners with USDA Seal – Unopened	2 weeks	
Raw Hamburger, Ground and Stew Meat		
Ground Beef, Turkey, Veal, Pork, Lamb	1 – 2 days	
Stew Meats	1 – 2 days	
Ham, Corned Beef		
Ham, Canned – Labeled “Keep Refrigerated” – Unopened	6 – 9 months	
Ham, Canned – Labeled “Keep Refrigerated” – Opened	3 – 5 days	
Ham, Fully Cooked – Whole	7 days	
Ham, Fully Cooked – Half	3 – 5 days	
Ham, Fully Cooked – Sliced	3 – 4 days	
Corned Beef in Pouch with Pickling Juices	5 – 7 days	
Hot Dogs and Luncheon Meats		
Hot Dogs – Unopened Package	2 weeks	
Hot Dogs – Opened Package	3 – 5 days	
Luncheon Meats – Unopened	2 weeks	
Luncheon Meats – Opened	3 – 5 days	
Bacon	7 days	
Sausage, Raw from meat or Poultry	1 – 2 days	
Smoked Breakfast Links, Patties	7 days	
Summer Sausage Labeled “Keep Refrigerated” – Unopened	3 months	
Summer Sausage Labeled “Keep Refrigerated” – Opened	3 weeks	
Hard Sausage (such as Pepperoni)	2 – 3 weeks	

Storage Times for Refrigerated Foods Continued

Cooked Meat, Poultry, and Fish Leftovers	
Pieces and Cooked Casseroles	3 – 4 days
Gravy and Broth, Patties and Nuggets	1 – 2 days
Soups and Stews	3 – 4 days
Fresh Meat (Beef, Veal, Lamb, and Pork)	
Steaks, Chops, Roasts	3 – 5 days
Variety Meats (Tongue, Kidneys, Liver, Heart, Chitterlings)	1 – 2 days
Fresh Poultry	
Chicken or Turkey, Whole	1 – 2 days
Chicken or Turkey, Parts	1 – 2 days
Giblets	1 – 2 days
Fresh Fish and Shellfish	
Fresh fish and Shellfish	1 – 2 days

This chart originated from USDA FSIS – United States Department of Agriculture/Food Safety and Inspection Service

Fresh Vegetables

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	Blanched/Cooked or Frozen
Asparagus, Green or Wax Beans	1 – 2 days (Refrigerator)	8 months
Cabbage, Carrots, Celery, Leeks, Parsnips, Turnips	1 – 2 weeks (Refrigerator)	10 months
Cucumbers	4 – 5 days (Refrigerator)	Not Recommended
Lettuce – Iceberg	1 – 2 days (Refrigerator)	Not Recommended
Lettuce – Leaf	3 – 7 days (Refrigerator)	Not Recommended
Mushrooms	2 – 3 days (Refrigerator)	10 – 12 months
Onions – Dry	2 months (Refrigerator) or 2 – 3 weeks (Pantry)	10 – 12 months
Onions – Green	1 – 2 weeks (Refrigerator)	
Peppers – Bell or Chili	7 days (Refrigerator)	8 months
Potatoes	1 – 2 weeks (Refrigerator) or 1 – 2 months (Pantry)	Cooked & Mashed, 10 – 12 months
Tomatoes	2 – 3 days (Refrigerator) or Until Ripe (Pantry)	2 months

Fresh Fruits

FOOD	RECOMMENDED STORAGE TIME	Blanched/Cooked or Frozen
Apples	1 month (Refrigerator) or 1 – 2 days (Pantry)	Cooked, 8 months
Apricots	2 – 3 days (Refrigerator) or Until Ripe (Pantry)	6 months
Bananas	3 days (Refrigerator) or Until Ripe (Pantry) *Skin will Blacken	Whole, Peeled – 6 months
Berries – Cherries	2 – 3 days (Refrigerator)	6 months
Citrus Fruit	1 – 2 weeks (Refrigerator) or 10 days (Pantry)	Not Recommended
Grapes	1 week (Refrigerator) or 1 day (Pantry)	Whole – 1 month
Melon	3 – 4 days (Refrigerator) or 1 – 2 days (Pantry)	Balls – 4 months
Peaches – Nectarines	3 – 4 days (Refrigerator) or Until Ripe (Pantry)	Sliced with Lemon Juice and Sugar – 2 months
Pears – Plums	3 – 4 days (Refrigerator) or 3 – 5 days (Pantry)	Not Recommended
