

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 <i>(once opened, store in airtight containers, out of light and heat)</i>	
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 <i>(once opened, store covered in airtight container in refrigerator)</i>	
Evaporated milk	9-12 mo
Other canned foods.....	1 yr.

DRY FOODS <i>(once opened, store in airtight containers, out of light and heat)</i>	
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 <i>(check “best before” dates)</i>	
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	
All 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