

# 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

### 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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