

Food Handlers' Storage Guide

General guidelines for the shelf life of common foods. Read the label and check for "best before" dates. Most foods, except those marked with an "expiry date", are safe to eat if stored longer, but flavor and nutritional value will deteriorate. Discard if there is any sign 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 months
Cereals (ready-to-eat)	8 months
Cornmeal	6-8 months
Crackers	6 months
Pasta	several years
Rice	several years
Rolled oats	6-10 months
White flour	1 year
Whole wheat flour	3 months

CANNED FOODS

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

Evaporated milk	9-12 months
Other canned foods	1 year

DRY FOODS

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

Baking powder, baking soda	1 year
Beans, peas, lentils	1 year
Chocolate (baking)	7 months
Cocoa	10-12 months
Coffee (ground)	1 month
Coffee (instant)	1 year
Coffee whitener	6 months
Fruit (dried)	1 year
Gelatin	1 year
Jelly powder	2 years
Mixes (cake, pancake, tea biscuit)	1 year
Mixes (pie filling and pudding)	18 months
Mixes (main dish accompaniments)	9-12 months
Potatoes (flakes)	1 year
Skim milk powder - unopened	1 year
- opened	1 month
Sugar (all types)	several years
Tea bags	1 year

MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

Honey	18 months
Jam, jellies (once opened, store covered in refrigerator)	1 year
Mayonnaise, salad dressings	
- unopened	6 months
- opened (store covered in refrigerator)	1-2 months
Molasses	2 years
Nuts	1 month
Peanut butter - unopened	6 months
- opened	2 months
Pectin - liquid	1 year
- opened (store covered in refrigerator)	1 month
- powdered	2 years
Sandwich spread (once opened, store covered in refrigerator)	8 months
Syrups - corn, maple, table	1 year
Vegetable oils (once opened, store covered in refrigerator)	1 year
Vinegar	several years
Yeast (dry)	1 year

VEGETABLES

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

Refrigerator (4°C, 40°F)

Unless otherwise specified, cover all foods.

DAIRY PRODUCTS AND EGGS

(check "best before" dates)

Butter - unopened	8 weeks
- opened	3 weeks
Cheese - cottage (once opened)	3 days
- firm	several months
- processed (unopened)	several months
- processed (opened)	3-4 weeks
Eggs	3 weeks
Margarine - unopened	8 months
- opened	1 month
Milk, cream, yogurt (once opened)	3 days

FISH AND SHELLFISH

Clams, crab, lobster, mussels (live)	12-24 hours
Fish (cleaned) - raw	3-4 days
- cooked	1-2 days
Oysters (live)	24 hours
Scallops, shrimp (raw)	1-2 days
Shellfish (cooked)	1-2 days

FRESH FRUIT (RIPE)

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

FRESH VEGETABLES

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

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, meat sauces	2-3 days
Soups	2-3 days

MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

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

Freezer (-18°C, 0°F)

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

DAIRY PRODUCTS AND FATS

Butter - salted	1 year
- unsalted	3 months
Cheese - firm, processed	3 months
Cream - table, whipping (separates when thawed)	1 month
Ice cream	1 month
Margarine	6 months
Milk	6 weeks

FISH AND SHELLFISH

Fish (fat species: lake trout, mackerel, salmon)	2 months
Fish (lean species: cod, haddock, pike, smelt)	6 months
Shellfish	2-4 months

FRUITS AND VEGETABLES

	1 year
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MEAT, POULTRY AND EGGS

Uncooked	
Beef (roasts, steaks)	10-12 months
Chicken, turkey - cut up	6 months
- whole	1 year
Cured or smoked meat	1-2 months
Duck, goose	3 months
Eggs (whites, yolks)	4 months
Ground meat	2-3 months
Lamb (chops, roasts)	8-12 months
Pork (chops, roasts)	8-12 months
Sausages, wieners	2-3 months
Variety meats, giblets	3-4 months
Veal (chops, roasts)	8-12 months
Cooked	
All meat	2-3 months
All poultry	1-3 months
Casseroles, meat pies	3 months

MISCELLANEOUS FOODS

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

TO LEARN MORE

To learn more about food safety, please contact an Environmental Health Officer at the nearest Government Service Centre, or an Environmental Health Program Manager with the Regional Health Authority; or you can visit www.canfightbac.org.



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