



SOUTH CAROLINA FAMILY AND COMMUNITY LEADERS

Affiliated with National Volunteer Outreach Network, Country Women's Council, U.S.A., Associated Country Women of the World and in partnership with Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service
SCFCL website: <http://www.scfcl.com>

Leader Training Guide

How Long to Keep It – Proper Food Storage

Objectives:

The participants will be able to:

1. Know when food should be discarded
2. More aware of food storage

Lesson Overview/Introduction:

Food Safety is very important to everyone, especially the elderly community. Salmonella, listeria and other foodborne pathogens can be found in many places. Unfortunately, older people are more likely to get ill from them. You will have less risk by properly handling and storing food. This lesson focuses on the storage of foods.

Lesson:

Start your lesson off by leading the question/answer activity with the group. Pass out the answers to participants. (See "Suggested Activity" to prepare cards) Ask your questions to stimulate some discussion on food safety.

1. How long can perishable food be kept out of the refrigerator?

Answer: Always refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours (1 hour when the temperature is above 90 °F). Perishable foods left out of the refrigerator for more than 2 hours should be discarded. Place food into shallow containers and immediately put in the refrigerator or freezer for rapid cooling. Use most cooked leftovers within 3 to 4 days. (See handout for more information). Leftovers should be properly reheated to 165 °F.

2. What should be the temperature of your refrigerator?

Answer: Check the temperature of your refrigerator and freezer with an appliance thermometer. The refrigerator should be at 40 °F

3. What should be the temperature of your freezer?

Answer: The freezer temperature should be 0 °F or below.

4. How long can fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats be kept in the refrigerator?

Answer: Cook or freeze fresh poultry, fish, ground meats, and variety meats within 2 days. Perishable food such as meat and poultry should be wrapped securely to maintain quality and to prevent meat juices from getting onto other food.

5. How long can other beef, veal, lamb, or pork be kept in the refrigerator?

Answer: Beef, veal, lamb, or pork, should only be kept in the refrigerator for 3 to 5 days. To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original package, wrap the package again with foil or plastic wrap before freezing.

6. How long can high-acid canned food such as tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapple be stored unopened on the shelf?

Answer: In general, high-acid canned food such as tomatoes, grapefruit, and pineapple can be stored unopened on the shelf for 12 to 18 months.

7. How long can low-acid canned food such as meat, poultry, fish, and most vegetables be kept unopened on the shelf?

Answer: Low-acid canned food such as meat, poultry, fish, and most vegetables will keep 2 to 5 years-if the unopened can remains in good condition and has been stored in a cool, clean, and dry place. Discard cans that are dented, leaking, bulging, or rusted.

The following is addition food safety information to share with your group:

To help assure quality, some products have “open dates” on the package. Product dating is optional on most products. Dates may also be “coded” by the manufacturer and only understood by them. The most commonly used open dates are:

Sell-by Date: This is the last recommended day of sale but allows for home storage and use. The date is given after the statement, “Sell by (a date).” Bread and baked goods may have “sell-by dates.”

Use-by Date: Tells how long the product will retain top quality after you buy it. You will find this date after the statement, “Use by.” Some packaged goods have “use-by dates.”

Expiration Date: This is the last day the product should be used or eaten. You may find this date after the statement, “Do not use after (date).” Eggs may have “expiration dates.”

Pack Date: Canned or packaged foods may have dates that tell you when the product was processed. This does not tell how long the food will be good.

These are guidelines; if a food is not properly handled, its storage life will be shortened. Follow these tips for purchasing top-quality foods that have been handled safely. (HGIC 3522)

Suggested Activities:

Activity 1: What is the answer?

Writing the following on index cards. These are used for the start of your lesson to inspire participants to talk about food safety:

32°	3 days	2 years
30°	4 days	2 to 5 years
40°	3 to 5 days	2 hours
0°	12 to 18 months	
2 days	12 months	4hours

Instructions: The above information is the answers. Pass them out to all your participants. As you ask the questions, have the participants give the answers. Not all the answers will be used. Read the information above to give the answers to each question.

Additional Information:

Share the handout with each member of your group. Ask them to keep it close to their refrigerator as a reminder of when to throw items out.

Lesson Summary:

As individuals age, we need to be award of food safety. Clean out your refrigerator often. Many items need to be thrown out after 7 days. Make it a habit. It is cheaper to throw out food than to pay for an ER visit. Food safety is important. Keep things fresh.

Resources/References:

“Food Safety”. www.fsis.usda.gov

“Should You Toss That Food? Let Your Senses Help You Decide”. www.aarp.org.

“Food Storage: Refrigerator & Freezer”. Factsheet. HGIC 3522. Revised: Mar 31, 2020.

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Recommended Times for Refrigerator & Freezer Food Storage*For a complete list : HGIC 3522*

Food	Refrigerator	Freezer
Dairy		
Fresh milk	5- 7 days	*
Yogurt, cottage cheese	7 days (after “sell-by date”)	*
Hard cheese, grated cheese	6-12 weeks	6-12 months
Butter/margarine	2 weeks	9 months
Ice cream	*	2 months
Eggs		
Fresh in shell	3-5 weeks	*
Hard cooked	1 week	*
Meats, Fresh		
Beef roasts, steaks	3-5 days	6-12 months
Chicken or turkey, pieces	1-2 days	9-12 months
Chicken or turkey, whole	1-2 days	1 year
Ground meat or stew	1-2 days	3-4 months
Pork, roasts or chops	3-5 days	4-6 months
Pre-stuffed pork & lamb chops or chicken breasts	1-2 days	9 months
Sausage	1-2 days	1-2 months
Roasts, steaks, chops	3-5 days	6-12 months
Meats, Cooked		
Smoked breakfast sausage	7 days	1-2 months
Whole ham (fully cooked)	7days	1-2 months
Half ham (fully cooked)	3-5 days	1-2 months
Ham slices (fully cooked)	3-4 days	1-2 months
Canned ham (“keep refrigerated” label)	6-9 months	*
Hotdogs, luncheon meats (unopened)	2 weeks	1-2 months
Hotdogs, luncheon meats (opened)	3-7 days	1-2 months
Cooked, leftover meat	3-4 days	2-3 months
Leftover gravy & meat broth	1-2 days	2-3 months
Cooked, leftover poultry	3-4 days	4-6 months
Cooked, leftover chicken nuggets or patties	1-2 days	1-3 months
Seafood, Fresh		
Fresh lean fish: cod, flounder, trout, haddock, halibut, pollack, perch	1-2 days	6-10 months
Fresh fatty fish: mullet, smelt, salmon, mackerel, bluefish, tuna & swordfish	1-2 days	2-3 months
Live crabs & lobster	same day purchased	2-3 months
Shrimp, crabmeat	2-3 days	4 months
Scallops	2-3 days	3 months
Cooked Fish		

Fish sticks	*	18 months
Bread shrimp, commercial	*	1 year
Cooked pieces	3-4 days	1-2 months
Fruits, (Fresh)		
Apples	1 months	8-12 months
Apricots, grapes, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums	3-5 days	8-12 months
Bananas, plantains	3 days	8-12 months
Berries, cherries	2-3 days	8-12 months
Grapefruit, lemons, limes, oranges	2 weeks	4-6 months
Kiwis	3-5 days	4-6 months
Melons	1 week	8-12 months
Vegetable, (Fresh)		
Beets, carrots	2 weeks	8-12 months
Beans, broccoli, lima beans, peas, summer squash	3-5 days	8-12 months
Celery, cabbage, green beans, peppers, tomatoes	1 week	8-12 months
Greens, corn	1-2 weeks	8-12 months
Lettuce & salad greens	1 week	*
Mushrooms, okra	2-7 days	8-12 months
Radishes	2 weeks	*
Squash, hard	4-5 days	8-12 months
Baked Products		
Bread: Store at room temperature. Storing in the refrigerator promotes staling. Use the date as a guide or use within 3 to 7 days.		
Bread, yeast	3-7 days	6-12 months
Muffins, rolls, quick breads	3-7 days	2-4 months
Pancakes & waffles	3-7 days	1-2 months
Cookies		
Baked	*	4-6 months
Unbaked dough	2-3 days	6 months
Cakes: Store at room temperature, except for cheesecake. Best used within 3 to 7 days.		
Angel and sponge	*	4-6 months
Cheese	3-4 weeks	4-6 months
Fruit	*	1 year
Layer cake (butter cream icing or plain)	*	6 months
Pastries: Store at room temperature. Best used within 1 to 3 days.		
Danish, doughnuts	*	3 months
Pies		
Chiffon pie, pumpkin pie	1-2 days	1 month
Fruit pie	1-2 days	1 year
Unbaked fruit pies	*	8 months