



Cold Food Storage

Note: These short but safe time limits will help keep refrigerated foods from spoiling or becoming dangerous to eat. Because freezing keeps food safe indefinitely, recommended storage times are for quality only. Storage times are from date of purchase unless specified on chart. It is not important if a date expires after food is frozen.

Product	Refrigerator (40 °F)	Freezer (0 °F)
	Max time for safety	Max time for quality
Eggs		
Fresh, in shell	3 to 5 weeks	Doesn't freeze
Raw yolks, whites	2 to 4 days	1 year
Hard cooked	1 week	Doesn't freeze well
Liquid pasteurized eggs, egg substitutes - opened	3 days	Doesn't freeze well
Liquid pasteurized eggs, egg substitutes - unopened	10 days	1 year
Mayonnaise		
Commercial, refrigerate after opening	2 months	Doesn't freeze
Deli & Vacuum-Packed Products		
Store-prepared (or homemade) egg, chicken, ham, tuna, macaroni salads	3 to 5 days	Doesn't freeze well
Hot dogs & Luncheon Meats		
Hot dogs - opened package	1 week	1 to 2 months
Hot dogs - unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Luncheon meats - opened package	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Luncheon meats - unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Bacon & Sausage		
Bacon	7 days	1 month
Sausage, raw from chicken, turkey, pork, beef	1 to 2 days	1 to 2 months
Smoked breakfast links, patties	7 days	1 to 2 months
Hard sausage--pepperoni, jerky sticks	2 to 3 weeks	1 to 2 months

Summer sausage(labeled "Keep Refrigerated") - opened	3 weeks	1 to 2 months
Summer sausage(labeled "Keep Refrigerated") – unopened	3 months	1 to 2 months
Ham, Corned Beef		
Corned beef, in pouch with pickling juices	5 to 7 days	Drained, 1 month
Ham, canned--labeled "Keep Refrigerated" - opened	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Ham, canned--labeled "Keep Refrigerated" - unopened	6 to 9 months	Doesn't freeze
Ham, fully cooked vacuum sealed at plant, undated - unopened	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked vacuum sealed at plant, dated - unopened	"use by" date on package	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, whole	7 days	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, half	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
Ham, fully cooked, slices	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months
Hamburger, Ground & Stew Meat		
Hamburger & stew meat	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Ground turkey, veal, pork, lamb & mixtures of them	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Fresh Beef, Veal, Lamb, Pork		
Steaks	3 to 5 days	6 to 12 months
Chops	3 to 5 days	4 to 6 months
Roasts	3 to 5 days	4 to 12 months
Variety meats--tongue, liver, heart, kidneys, chitterlings	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months
Pre-stuffed, uncooked pork chops, lamb chops, or chicken breast stuffed with dressing	1 day	Doesn't freeze well
Soup & Stews		
Vegetable or meat added	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Meat Leftovers		
Cooked meat and meat casseroles	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Gravy and meat broth	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
Fresh Poultry		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Chicken or turkey, pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
Giblets	1 to 2 days	3 to 4 months

Cooked Poultry		
Fried chicken	3 to 4 days	4 months
Cooked poultry casseroles	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
Pieces, plain	3 to 4 days	4 months
Pieces covered with broth, gravy	1 to 2 days	6 months
Chicken nuggets, patties	1 to 2 days	1 to 3 months
Pizza		
Pizza	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months
Stuffing		
Stuffing--cooked	3 to 4 days	1 month
Beverages, Fruit		
Juices in cartons, fruit drinks, punch – opened	7 to 10 days	8 to 12 months
Juices in cartons, fruit drinks, punch – unopened	3 weeks	
Dairy		
Butter	1 to 3 months	6 to 9 months
Buttermilk	7 to 14 days	3 months
Cheese, Hard (such as Cheddar, Swiss) – opened	3 to 4 weeks	6 months
Cheese, Hard (such as Cheddar, Swiss) – unopened	6 months	
Cheese Soft (such as Brie, Bel Paese, American)	1 week	6 months
Cottage Cheese, Ricotta	1 week	Doesn't freeze well
Cream Cheese	2 weeks	Doesn't freeze well
Cream--Whipped, ultra pasteurized	1 month	Doesn't freeze
Cream--Whipped, Sweetened	1 day	1 to 2 months
Cream--Aerosol can, real whipped cream	3 to 4 weeks	Doesn't freeze
Cream--Aerosol can, non dairy topping	3 months	Doesn't freeze
Cream, Half and Half	3 to 4 days	4 months
Eggnog, commercial	3 to 5 days	6 months
Margarine	4 to 5 months	12 months
Milk	7 days	3 months
Pudding – opened	2 days	Doesn't freeze
Pudding – unopened	package date	
Sour cream	7 to 21 days	Doesn't freeze

Yogurt	7 to 14 days	1 to 2 months
Dough		
Tube cans of rolls, biscuits, pizza dough, etc.	Use-by-date	Doesn't freeze
Ready-to-bake pie crust	Use-by-date	2 months
Cookie dough	Use-by-date unopened or opened	2 months
Fish		
Lean fish (cod, flounder, haddock, sole, etc.)	1 to 2 days	6 months
Fatty fish (bluefish, mackerel, salmon, etc.)	1 to 2 days	2 to 3 months
Cooked fish	3 to 4 days	4 to 6 months
Smoked fish	14 days or date on vacuum package	2 months in vacuum package
Shellfish		
Shrimp, scallops, crayfish, squid, shucked clams, mussels and oysters	1 to 2 days	3 to 6 months
Live clams, mussels, crab, lobster and oysters	2 to 3 days	2 to 3 months
Cooked shellfish	3 to 4 days	3 months

Sources:

- USDA, Food Safety and Inspection Service
- *The Food Keeper*, The Food Marketing Institute

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Food Safety and Inspection Service
www.fsis.usda.gov

USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline
1 (800) 535-4555
In Washington, DC: (202) 720-3333
TTY: 1 (800) 256-7072

U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition
www.cfsan.fda.gov