

# Safe Food Handling

Food Safety of Food Coming from the Food Bank or Food Pantry

The Dating Game

A consumer's guide to Food Quality and Safe Food Handling

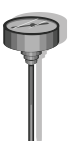
Proper Food Storage

The Food Handler's Guide to Safe Food

Checklist for Safe Food Handling

Close Encounters of the Worst Kind

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# Food Safety of Food Coming from the Food Bank or Food Pantry

## Remember, When in Doubt...Throw it OUT!

### Shelf Stable Items Past Code Date

Many of the shelf stable items are donated, and may be past their code dates (Sell by Date, Use By Date). Food Pantry staff monitors this food to ensure that the quality remains good. This food is safe to eat!

### What do Code Dates on Food Mean?

Expiration Date is found on baby food and formula, medicines, vitamins, yeast and baking powder- don't consume these. Sell by or Use by dates are found on canned, boxed and refrigerated food such as milk, yogurt, eggs and lunch meat. Retail stores must sell these foods before the code date or take the items off the shelf. These foods are often donated to the food pantries.

The shelf life of canned, boxed, refrigerated and frozen foods can be extended if they are handled properly. Once a perishable item is frozen, it doesn't matter if the date expires- food kept frozen continuously is safe indefinitely, though the quality may not be as good.

### Frozen Meat

You will often receive meat that is past it's date. This meat was frozen BEFORE the date and is safe! Before cooking meat, be sure to thaw completely in the refrigerator. Never thaw meat at room temperature or on a counter.

### Frozen Meat Sometimes Has A Brown Color

Color change does not mean that it is spoiled. The darkening of meat does not affect the safety of the product. When meat is safely stored in the refrigerator or freezer, color changes are normal. If meat is spoiled, it will have an odor and be sticky or slimy in addition to a change in color. Meat with these characteristics should not be eaten.

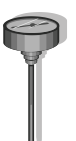
How to store canned and boxed foods:

1. Keep in a clean, dry and cool place.
2. Store canned and dried goods off of the floor
3. Avoid extremely hot (90 degree or higher) or cold (30 degrees or less) temperatures.

### Fresh Produce

Produce donated to the Food Pantry may not be perfect. however, it is good to eat with just a bit of preparation:

1. Tear off browned and wilted leaves off of lettuce and cabbage.
2. Cut off soft and brown spots on vegetables or fruit and prepare as usual.



## The Dating Game

### What do the Dates on Food Packages and Medicines Mean?

The only foods that are required by federal law to have expiration dates are baby food, infant formula, and over-the-counter medications. Some products designed for babies such as juice and cookies or biscuits can be distributed past their date and are safe to eat. Many canned and boxed products are safe to eat long after the date on the container, and the shelf life of refrigerated and frozen foods can be extended if they are handled properly. Once a perishable item is frozen, it doesn't matter if the date expires-- foods kept frozen continuously are safe indefinitely, though the quality slowly deteriorates over time.

Here are some code dates you may see on food packages:

**“Expiration Date”** (Examples: “Expires 2/15/06” or “Do not use after 7/9/05”)

Look for it on: Baby food and formula, medicines, vitamins, yeast, baking powder.

What it means: Do not distribute infant formula, vitamins, or medicines after the expiration date! Yeast and baking powder work less well after expiration but are safe to eat.

**“Pack Date”** (Examples: “Packed on 9/23/05” or “192 VIG 2109”)

Look for it on: Canned food, crackers, cookies, spices.

What it means: This is the date the food was packaged. A code is often used that cannot be understood by the general public. Usually this food is of good quality and safe to eat a long time past the date.

**“Sell By”** Date (Example: “Sell by May 16, 2005”. Also called Pull Date)

Look for it on: Refrigerated foods such as milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, eggs, lunch meat, packaged salad mixes.

What it means: The store must sell these foods before the code date listed and often donates these foods when they are close to date. If the food has been handled properly it is still safe to eat and the quality is good.

*Note: meats that are frozen on or before the ‘sell by’ date are safe to eat. The longer these foods are in the freezer the more quality (not safety!) are affected. You may see more evidence of freezer burn as time goes on. The meat is still safe to eat.*

**“Use By”** or Quality Date (Examples: “Best if used by 3/1/05” or “Use Before 5/15/05”)

Look for it on: Crackers, cookies, cold cereals, and other dry, shelf stable food.

What it means: This date is the manufacturer's recommendation for how long the food will be at peak quality. After the quality date, the food is still safe to eat but slowly begins to lose nutrients and the quality begins to lessen.



## A Consumer's Guide to Food Quality and Safe Food Handling

We have many choices of fresh, frozen, canned, and prepared foods. Our stores are required to maintain quality assurance and sanitation standards to make sure we receive wholesome and safe food products. After we select our food items, it is up to us to take care of them properly. **IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBT ABOUT A FOOD ITEM, THROW IT OUT!**

### At the Store

- Shop for shelf-stable items such as canned and dry goods first.
- Buy refrigerated, frozen foods and hot deli items last – right before checking out at the cash register.
- Do not choose meat, fish, poultry or dairy products that feel warm to the touch or have a damaged or torn package. Place leaking or wet packages in plastic bags.
- Choose only pasteurized dairy products.
- Choose only refrigerated eggs and make sure they are not cracked or dirty.
- Check “sell-by” and “use-by” dates on packages.
- Buy intact cans that are not bulging, leaking or dented on the seam or rim.

### Safe Food Handling in the Home

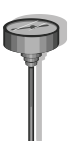
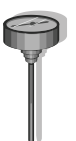
Many cases of food poisoning occur each year due to improper handling of foods in the home. Once you purchase food, go directly home. If this is not possible, keep a cooler with ice or freezer packs in the car to transport cold, perishable items. Once you arrive home, immediately put cold perishables into the refrigerator or freezer.

Hot perishable foods either brought home from the store or congregate meal site need to be kept warm and consumed within two hours. If you purchase hot deli foods to eat at a later time, place the food in small portions in shallow containers and refrigerate or freeze as soon as possible. Perishable foods should be kept at room temperature no longer than two hours.

Bacteria multiply rapidly at temperatures between 40 degrees F and 140 degrees F. Unfortunately, the harmful bacteria that cause most cases of food poisoning cannot be seen, smelled, or tasted.

#### FOR FOOD SAFETY IT IS IMPORTANT TO:

- Keep COLD FOODS COLD (40° F or below) and
- HOT FOODS HOT (above 140° F)
- Keep EVERYTHING clean:  
hands, utensils, counter, cutting boards and sinks.
- Always WASH HANDS thoroughly in hot soapy water before preparing foods, and after handling raw meat, poultry or seafood.
- Do not let RAW JUICES from meat, poultry or seafood touch ready-to-eat foods in the refrigerator or during food preparation.



## Proper Food Storage

### Refrigerator

Keep food in the refrigerator to preserve its freshness and keep it safe. Cold temperatures keep food fresh and inhibit the growth of most bacteria. However, food spoiling microorganisms can still grow and multiply slowly over time, so there is a limit to the length of time various food will stay fresh in the refrigerator. Eventually, food will begin to look and, or smell bad, at which point, it should be thrown out.

**\* keep refrigerator at 40 degrees F or below**

**\* Do not overload refrigerator. Cold air needs to circulate freely to cool evenly.**

- Leave meat and poultry products in the store wrap before using, since repeated handling can introduce bacteria into the product or spread bacteria around the kitchen.
- Store opened food in foil, plastic wrap, leakproof plastic bags or airtight containers to keep food from spilling or drying out.
- Place meat, poultry, and seafood in the coldest part of the refrigerator.
- Store eggs in their original carton.
- Defrost frozen meats or marinate meats in the refrigerator on the bottom shelf where they will remain temperature-safe -- never on the kitchen counter.
- Clean the refrigerator regularly to remove spoiled foods so that bacteria cannot be passed to other foods.
- Do not wash poultry before cooking. Harmful pathogens can spread to counters, sinks and surfaces. They will be killed when cooked to an internal temperature of at least 165 degrees F.

#### FIFO

Practice "First In, First Out", using the oldest foods first. Put the new foods behind the older ones on the shelf. This will help reduce waste.



## Proper Food Storage

### Freezer

Because food frozen at peak quality will taste better than foods frozen near the end of their useful life, quickly freeze items you do not plan to use in the next day or two.

Proper packaging helps to maintain quality and prevent “freezer burn.” It is safe to freeze foods in their supermarket wrappings. For longer storage, wrap packages with airtight heavy-duty foil, plastic wrap, freezer paper, or place packages inside a plastic bag. Date packages and use them within a month or two, using the oldest items first.

.....  
: If frozen food gets  
: “freezer burn,” it  
: is still safe to eat;  
: it is merely dry in  
: spots. Cut freezer-  
: burned portions  
: away either  
: before or after  
: cooking the food.  
: .....

Freezing to 0° F inactivates but does NOT destroy microbes - bacteria, yeasts, and molds - present in food. Once food is thawed, these microbes can again become active, multiplying under the right conditions to levels that can lead to foodborne illness.

Never defrost foods outdoors, or on the kitchen counter. These methods encourage growth of harmful bacteria that may be present.

There are three safe ways to defrost food:  
(1) in the refrigerator  
(2) in cold water and  
(3) in the microwave.

⚠ Food thawed in a microwave must be cooked immediately and not left at room temperatures. Some areas of the food have started “cooking” and are at unsafe temperatures.

⚠ Food thawed in the refrigerator is safe to refreeze without cooking. It is important to plan ahead because food may take several hours to thaw in the refrigerator.

### Home Pantry Storage

Shelf-stable foods such as canned goods, cereal, baking mixes, pasta, dry beans, mustard, ketchup and peanut butter can be kept unopened safely at room temperature. However, be sure to read package labels. Some items must be refrigerated after opening.

To keep these foods at their best quality, store in clean, dry, cool cabinets away from the stove or the refrigerator’s exhaust. Extremely hot (over 100° F) and cold temperatures are harmful to canned goods.

In general, most canned foods have a long “shelf life,” and when properly stored, they are safe to eat for several years:

- Low-acid canned goods: 2 to 5 years (canned meat and poultry, stews, soups [except tomato soup], pasta products, potatoes, corn, carrots, spinach, beans, beets, peas and pumpkin).
- High-acid canned goods: 12 to 18 months (tomato products, fruits, sauerkraut and foods in vinegar-based sauces or dressings).
- Some canned hams are shelf-stable. Never store ham or any foods labeled “keep refrigerated” in the pantry. Such foods must be stored in the refrigerator.



## The Food Handler's Guide to Safe Food

**Important!** When serving the public, there are special rules about handling food for service that you may not use in your own home. You will be people of all ages with different degrees of immunity. People most susceptible to foodborne illness are the very young children, older adults, pregnant women, people who have chronic diseases, those who are recovering from recent surgery or organ transplant and those on certain long term medicines.

### Do Not Prepare Food If:

1. You have Diarrhea or are vomiting.
2. You have Hepatitis A, Shigella, Salmonella or E. Coli.
3. You have a sore throat or fever.

### Handwashing

Wash your hands as often as necessary to keep them clean!

Use warm water and soap to scrub hands and forearms for 20 seconds before rinsing.

### Wash your hands

1. Before handling food or wearing gloves.
2. After handling any raw products.
3. After using restroom, smoking or eating.
4. After taking out the garbage.
5. After touching your hair or skin.
6. After handling money.

### Proper Glove Use

Use utensils or non-latex gloves when handling foods that will no longer be cooked.

1. Wash hands before putting gloves on for the first time or when changing gloves.

2. Change gloves when they become soiled or torn and when you start a new task.

### Sanitizing

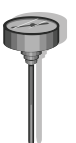
1. 3 compartment sink:  
Wash, Rinse, Sanitize

2. Use test strips to check the concentration of your sanitizing solution.

3. Change water when it becomes soiled.



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## The Food Handler's Guide to Safe Food

**Potentially Hazardous foods** (PHF's) are foods requiring Time and Temperature Control for Safety (TCS) support rapid growth of harmful pathogens:

1. Cooked or raw meats, poultry, dairy, fish and seafood.
2. Cooked rice, beans, potatoes, and pasta.
3. Tofu, raw seed sprouts, cut melon, garlic in oil.
4. Raw cut vegetables like tomatoes and lettuce.
5. Ready to eat foods like prepared salads.

### Thawing Frozen Foods

1. As a part of the cooking process. ie: frozen chicken or fries in a deep fryer.
2. In the refrigerator.
3. Under cold running water (not warmer than 70 degrees F.)
4. In the microwave– ONLY if cooking immediately afterward.

**Do NOT thaw at room temperatures!!**

### Cooking

Foods must meet minimum temperature guidelines to reduce pathogen growth.

1. Always verify internal cooking temperatures with a thermometer.
2. Cook and Reheat foods in the microwave to at least 165 degrees .
3. Foods held for service that drop below 140 degrees F within 2 hours must be quickly reheated to 165 degrees or above to minimize risk.

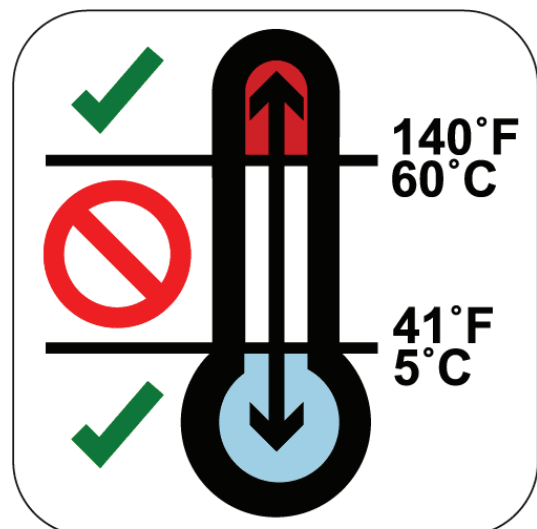
### Cooling

Food items must be cooled from 140 degrees F to 41 degrees F within 4 hours.

1. Break down large solids items into smaller pieces. ie: roast beef
2. Place liquid and semisolid items into shallow metal containers.
3. Once these steps are done, food items must be place in the refrigerator right away or be cooled in an ice water bath.

The Danger Zone!!!!

Keep Hot foods HOT: at 140 degrees F or above.



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Keep Cold Foods COLD: Held or displayed at 41 degrees or below.





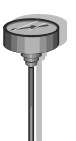
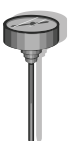
## Checklist for Safe Food Handling

### Keep Yourself and the Kitchen Clean

- Wash hands thoroughly before cooking. Proper hand washing requires soap, warm water, and at least 20 seconds of working the soap into the hands, including the fingernail area and between the fingers.
- Wash hands with soap and water after handling raw meat, poultry, and fish.
- Wash hands after touching anything else such as face, hair, clothes, and pets.
- Pull long hair back away from the face.
- Bandage open cuts and sores on hands. If available, wear a latex glove on the bandaged hand.
- Wash counters with soap and water as you work.
- Use clean washing and drying cloths.
- Wash knives, cutting boards, and other utensils used with raw meat, poultry, and fish before using them with other foods. Using a solution of bleach and water or washing in the dishwasher is recommended after cutting boards are exposed to raw meat, poultry, and fish.

### Keep Food at Proper Temperatures

- Keep foods that need refrigeration below 40° Fahrenheit. Use a thermometer to check the temperature of your refrigerator.
- Let food sit at room temperature no longer than two hours.
- Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator, under cold running water, in a microwave oven just before use, or as part of the cooking process.
- Use food immediately after thawing, especially if cold running water or the microwave oven was used for thawing and the food is not refrigerated.
- Cook food thoroughly. Use a thermometer to check correct temperature.
- Cool food quickly by refrigerating in small quantities and in shallow dishes.



# Close Encounters of the Worst Kind

## SHIGELLA

causes thousands of cases of dysentery

### SOURCE:

- Human hands



### FOODS:

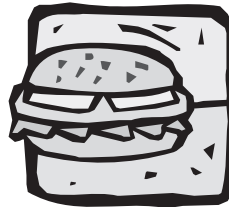
- Milk and dairy products
- Produce • Salads

## STAPHYLOCCUS

causes "staph" infection

### SOURCE:

- Human nose, throat, hair, infected sores



### FOODS:

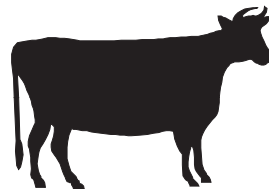
- Dairy products
- Cooked foods

## E. COLI O157-H7

can produce deadly toxins

### SOURCE:

- Intestinal tract of animals and humans



### FOODS:

- Raw and under-cooked ground beef
- Produce • Apple cider

## SALMONELLA

causes millions of cases of foodborne illness each year

### SOURCE:

- Intestinal tract of animals and humans



### FOODS:

- Raw and under-cooked eggs
- Meats
- Dairy products
- Seafood
- Fruits and vegetables

## GIARDIA

causes diarrhea, flatulence, bloating, loss of appetite, abdominal cramps, watery stools

### SOURCE:

- Contaminated water
- Intestinal tract of animals and humans



### FOODS:

- Contaminated water
- Foods handled a lot in preparation

## Steps to Control Foodborne Illness

**1 CLEAN:**  
Wash your hands and food surfaces often

**2 SEPARATE FOODS:**  
Don't cross-contaminate

**3 COOK:**  
Cook foods to safe temperatures

**4 CHILL:**  
Refrigerate food promptly



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