

Frozen Food

For long-term storage of many perishable foods, rely on the freezer. Food stored constantly at 0 °F or below will always be safe. Only the quality suffers with lengthy freezer storage.

Freezer Facts

- **Preventing Freezer Burn:** Freezer burn — white, dried-out patches on the surface of meat — won't make you sick, but it *does* make meat tough and tasteless. Here's how to avoid it:
 - Wrap freezer items in heavy freezer paper, plastic wrap, freezer bags, or foil.
 - Date all freezer packages. Use the oldest food first.
 - Place new items toward the back of the freezer — that way, older items are easier to access and you'll use them first.
- **Refreezing Thawed Food:** If food is thawed in the refrigerator, it is safe to refreeze it without cooking. (See *Thawing* section on page 16.)



However, there may be a loss of *quality* due to the moisture lost through defrosting.

- **Freezing Cooked Food:** After cooking raw food that was previously frozen, it is safe to freeze the cooked food. In addition, if previously cooked food were frozen and then thawed in the refrigerator, you may refreeze the unused portion.
- **Prevent Moisture Loss:** To maintain quality when freezing meat and poultry in its original packaging, overwrap the package with foil or plastic wrap that is recommended for use in the freezer.

Your Refrigerator and Freezer: Take Their Temperatures!

It's common to assume that your refrigerator's temperature control dial keeps food cold enough — but this isn't necessarily true. "Built-in" temperature control dials may not be effective, and if your refrigerator isn't cooling to 40 °F or below, you're providing a haven for bacteria to grow.

- Instead, use a separate appliance thermometer to check the internal refrigerator temperature and help keep food safe. They are available in grocery, hardware, and kitchen specialty stores.
- If the refrigerator thermometer shows a temperature that's too high (above 40 °F), adjust the refrigerator's control dial.
- Use the thermometer to check the freezer, too. It should read 0 °F or below. If not, adjust the dial.

Cold Storage Chart

Product	Refrigerator (40 °F or below)	Freezer (0 °F or below)
Eggs — See Page 29		
Salads		
Egg, chicken, ham, tuna & macaroni salads	3 to 5 days	Does not freeze well
Hot dogs		
opened package	1 week	1 to 2 months
unopened package	2 weeks	1 to 2 months
Luncheon meat		
opened package or deli sliced	3 to 5 days	1 to 2 months
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
Hamburger & Other Ground Meats		
Hamburger, ground beef, 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
Fresh Poultry		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1 to 2 days	1 year
Chicken or turkey, pieces	1 to 2 days	9 months
Soups & Stews		
Vegetable or meat added	3 to 4 days	2 to 3 months
Leftovers		
Cooked meat or poultry	3 to 4 days	2 to 6 months
Chicken nuggets or patties	3 to 4 days	1 to 3 months
Pizza	3 to 4 days	1 to 2 months