

Food Storage



Storing & chilling food:

Your fridge can help to keep foods fresh & safe to eat for longer as the cold temperature slows the growth of bacteria. To keep your food safe:

- keep your fridge at the right temperature (between 0°C & 5°C)
- keep food out of the fridge for the shortest time you can
- don't overfill your fridge
- don't keep leftovers for longer than two days
- cool cooked food as quickly as possible (ideally within 1 to 2 hours) then place in the fridge – splitting cooked food into smaller portions can help it to cool quicker

What you can store:

Cooked dishes & foods labelled with a 'use by' or 'keep refrigerated' label can be stored in the fridge. This includes:

- dairy produce – such as milk, cheese & butter
- raw & cooked meat
- eggs
- fresh fruit & vegetables
- ready meals

Food Labels:

Use by / Sell by – you must eat the food or throw it away by this date.

Best Before - The food is at its optimum before this date.

Storing eggs:



Eggs are best stored in the fridge as they are kept at a constant temperature. You can safely store a boiled egg in the fridge for a couple of days. You can also freeze boiled & raw (unshelled) eggs.

Freezing food:

Most types of foods can be frozen; however, the extreme cold can affect the quality of foods with a high-water content – such as fresh fruit & salad vegetables (cucumber, tomatoes). These foods are still fine to cook with but are better eaten from the fridge. As the cold air will cause foods to dry out, always store frozen foods in airtight containers or freezer bags.

Freezing meat & fish:

You can freeze all types of meat, fish & poultry as long as:

- It's within its use by date
- you wrap it properly to prevent damage from dehydration & oxidation – known as “freezer burn”

Frozen meat & fish will keep & be safe to eat for a long time, however, you should try to eat these foods within 3 to 6 months as the quality can be affected. Adding a label & date to frozen meat & fish can help with this.

Defrosting:

You should defrost meat & fish thoroughly before cooking as partially defrosted food may not cook evenly meaning harmful bacteria may survive. Defrost the food in a sealed container at the bottom of the fridge, to prevent it from becoming too warm or any liquid contaminating other foods in the fridge. If you intend to cook it as soon as it's defrosted, then you can use the microwave on the defrost setting. Once defrosted food needs to be eaten or thrown away within 24 hours.

Re-freezing:

Raw meat, fish & poultry can't be frozen again after they've been defrosted.

Cooked meat, fish & poultry can be frozen as long as they've been cooled. You should only refreeze these foods once after cooking as the more times you cool & reheat food, the higher the risk of food poisoning.

Foods stored in the freezer, such as ice cream & frozen desserts, should not be returned to the freezer once they have thawed.

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