

Healthy Eating: Food Storage Guide¹

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If you don't shop for groceries often, you may want to buy food that will last until your next trip to the store. The following storage guidelines for perishable foods will help you decide how much food to buy when you visit the grocery. Keep in mind that safe storage times depend on the condition of the food when you purchase it and your refrigerator temperature and humidity. Check foods often for any signs of spoilage.

Tip: Store fruits and vegetables (except bananas, potatoes, and tomatoes) in the crisper drawer of your refrigerator, and keep your refrigerator at or below 40°F. Bananas, potatoes, and tomatoes store best at room temperature. It is best to store fruits separate from vegetables.



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Table 1. Storage guidelines for selected perishable foods.

Fresh Fruit	
1–2 days	Strawberries, raspberries, cherries
2–4 days	Apricots, bananas (room temperature), blueberries, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, melons (cantaloupe, honeydew, watermelon, etc.)
1–2 weeks	Grapes, citrus fruits, cranberries
3 weeks	Apples
Fresh Vegetables	
1–2 days	Corn on the cob, greens (spinach, kale, collards, etc.)
2–3 days	Bok choy, mushrooms, okra, tomatoes (or until ripe; store at room temperature)
3–5 days	Asparagus, bell pepper, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cauliflower, cucumber, eggplant, peas, green onion, summer squash
1 week	Beans (snap or wax), celery, salad greens
1–2 weeks	Cabbage, beets, iceberg lettuce, radishes
2–3 weeks	Carrots, parsnips, rutabagas, turnips
3–4 weeks	Potatoes, sweet potatoes (store potatoes at room temperature)
Milk Products, Eggs, and Deli Meat	
3–5 days	Sliced deli meat (once package is opened)
1 week	Milk, cottage cheese
1–2 weeks	Yogurt
3–4 weeks	Hard cheese
3–5 weeks	Eggs, fresh, in shell

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2. First edition adapted by Jennifer Hillan, MSH, RD, LD/N, former ENAFS nutrition educator/trainer, from the USDA publication, *Shopping for Food and Making Meals in Minutes Using the Dietary Guidelines*. Subsequent revisions by Linda B. Bobroff, PhD, RD, LD/N, professor, Department of Family, Youth and Community Sciences, UF/IFAS Extension, Gainesville, FL 32611.

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