

Your Fridge & Food Safety

Keeping your refrigerator clean and organized helps to minimize food spoilage and reduces the risk of foodborne illness.



For more information, visit www.scdhec.gov/recycle or call 1-800-768-7348.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) – www.foodsafety.gov

* Most newer refrigerators have built-in thermostats, but you may have to purchase one for older models.

** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (USDA) defines “fresh” as whole poultry and cuts that have never been below 26°F.

*** USDA – www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm093704.htm



Storage Times for Refrigerated Foods

NOTE: These short but safe time limits will help keep home-refrigerated food from spoiling.

FOOD	REFRIGERATION TIME
Ground Meat, Ground Poultry & Stew Meat	
Ground beef, turkey, veal, pork, lamb	1-2 days
Stew meats	1-2 days
Fresh Meat (Beef, Veal, Lamb & Pork)	
Steaks, chops, roasts	3-5 days
Variety meats (e.g., tongue, kidneys, liver, heart, chitterlings)	1-2 days
Fresh Poultry	
Chicken or turkey, whole	1-2 days
Chicken or turkey, parts	1-2 days
Giblets	1-2 days
Bacon & Sausage	
Bacon	7 days
Sausage, raw from meat or poultry	1-2 days
Smoked breakfast links, patties	7 days
Summer sausage labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Unopened, 3 months Opened, 3 weeks
Hard sausage, pepperoni, jerky sticks	2-3 weeks
Ham, Corned Beef	
Ham, canned, labeled "Keep Refrigerated"	Unopened, 6-9 months Opened, 3-5 days
Ham, fully cooked, whole	7 days
Ham, fully cooked, half	3-5 days
Ham, fully cooked, slices	3-4 days
Corned beef in pouch with pickling juices	5-7 days
Hot Dogs and Luncheon Meats	
Hot dogs	Unopened package, 2 weeks Opened package, 1 week
Luncheon meat	Unopened package, 2 weeks Opened package, 3-5 days
Deli and Vacuum-Packed Products	
Store-prepared (or homemade) egg, chicken, tuna, ham and macaroni salads	3-5 days
Pre-stuffed pork and lamb chops and chicken breasts	1 day
Store-cooked dinners and entrees	3-4 days
Commercial brand vacuum-packed dinners with/ USDA seal, unopened	2 weeks
Cooked Meat, Poultry and Fish Leftovers	
Pieces and cooked casseroles	3-4 days
Gravy and broth, patties and nuggets	3-4 days
Soups and stews	3-4 days
Seafood	
Fresh fish and shellfish	1-2 days
Eggs	
Fresh, in shell	3-5 days
Raw yolks, whites	2-4 days
Hard-cooked	1 week
Liquid pasteurized eggs, egg substitutes	Unopened, 10 days Opened, 3 days
Cooked egg dishes	3-4 days
Mayonnaise	2 months

During a Power Outage

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed.
- The refrigerator will keep food safe for up to 4 hours. If the power is off longer, you can transfer food to a cooler and fill with ice or frozen gel packs. Make sure there is enough ice to keep food in the cooler at 40°F or below.
- Add more ice to the cooler as it begins to melt.
- A full freezer will hold the temperature for about 48 hours (24 hours if it is half full).
- Obtain dry ice or block ice if your power is going to be out for a prolonged period. Fifty pounds of dry ice should hold an 18-cubic-foot freezer for 2 days. (CAUTION: Do not touch dry ice with bare hands or place it in direct contact with food.)
- In freezers, food in the front, in the door, or in small, thin packages will defrost faster than large, thick items or food in the back or bottom of the unit.
- Never taste food to determine its safety after a power outage. When in doubt, throw it out!

SOURCE: USDA

