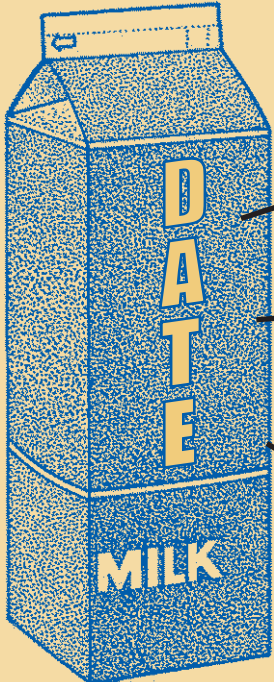


10 Ways to Fight Food Spoilers

- 1** Keep cold foods cold. Refrigerate foods promptly.
- 2** Keep hot foods hot. Room temperatures may allow germs to grow.
- 3** Watch the time. Perishable foods may not be safe to eat if kept at room temperature for more than two hours.
- 4** Wash hands and utensils often. Use hot, soapy water.
- 5** Buy foods only from clean stores.
- 6** Thaw frozen foods in the refrigerator or microwave, NOT on the kitchen counter.
- 7** Freeze cooked food if it isn't going to be eaten in a day or two.
- 8** Wash your cutting board, utensils, counter, sink, and hands before and after contact with raw meat, fish, or poultry.
- 9** Don't sample food that may have spoiled. Throw it out.
- 10** When in doubt, throw it out!



What's in a Date?

Many food products have a date stamped on them. Not all dates have the same meaning. Consider:

Use by
This is the last date recommended for the use of the food while at peak quality. After this date, the quality begins to go down.

Sell by
This tells the store how long to display the food. You should buy the product before this date. Use up the product or freeze it within a day or two past this date. Kentucky law requires a sell by date on milk and all products made from milk, such as yogurt and cheese.

Best if Used By (or Before)
This date is for best product quality. It is not related to safety. Sometimes the term "freshness" is used to mean the same thing.

Cold Storage		
Product	Refrigerator (40°F)	Freezer (0°F)
Eggs		
Fresh, in shell	1-3 weeks	Don't freeze
Raw yolks, whites	2-4 days	1 year
Hard cooked	1 week	Don't freeze well
Liquid pasteurized eggs or egg substitutes		
Opened	3 days	Don't freeze well
Unopened	10 days	1 year
Mayonnaise		
(Commercial) Refrigerate after opening	2 months	Don't freeze
TV Dinners, Frozen Casseroles		
Keep frozen until ready to serve		3-4 months
Soups and Stews		
Vegetable or meat-added	3-4 days	2-3 months
Hot Dogs and Lunch Meats		
Hot dogs		
Opened package	1 week	In freezer wrap, 1-2 months
Unopened package	2 weeks	
Lunch meats		
Opened	3-5 days	In freezer wrap, 1-2 months
Unopened	2 weeks	
Bacon and Sausage		
Bacon	7 days	1 month
Sausage, raw from pork, beef, turkey	1-2 days	1-2 months
Smoked breakfast links, patties	7 days	1-2 months
Meat Leftovers		
Cooked meat and meat dishes	3-4 days	2-3 months
Gravy and meat broth	1-2 days	2-3 months
Fresh Poultry		
	1-2 days	9-12 months
Cooked Poultry, Leftover		
	3-4 days	4-6 months

Written by Sandra Bastin, PhD, RD, LD, Food and Nutrition Specialist and Kathy Daly-Koziel, former EFNEP Coordinator

Reviewed by Elizabeth Buckner, MS, Extension Specialist for Nutrition Education Programs

Educational programs of Kentucky Cooperative Extension serve all people regardless of race, color, age, sex, religion, disability, or national origin. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, M. Scott Smith, Director of Cooperative Extension Service, University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Lexington, and Kentucky State University, Frankfort. Copyright © 2007 for materials developed by University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension. This publication may be reproduced in portions or its entirety for educational or nonprofit purposes only. Permitted users shall give credit to the author(s) and include this copyright notice. Publications are also available on the World Wide Web at www.ca.uky.edu.