



UTAH FOOD BANK

Safe Food Storage and Consumption Guidelines

For the Home



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Storage and Consumption Guidelines

Code Dating Terms

Use of Good Judgment: The following guidelines describe general safe storage and consumption recommendations once the product is in the home. Although based on research, these guidelines are only recommendations, not hard fast rules. Food safety within the home should be done on a case by case basis based on visual quality and the storage condition of the product.

Any signs of damage or deterioration supersede any and all of these guidelines. Remember to use good judgment. If in doubt, throw it out. Discarding unsafe or suspect food is not waste; it is helping to protect human health.

Shelf Life	<p>The length of time a product can be kept for use before quality considerations make it necessary or desirable to discard it.</p> <p>The determination of a products maximum shelf life is based upon the unopened condition and proper storage of that product. Any other storage condition, ones not meeting the strict recommendations of the product will reduce the shelf life and possible safety of that product.</p>
Code Dating	<p>Packaging numbers printed by the manufacturer. Coded information on products may include date of packaging, plant location, lot number etc. There are no uniform or universal standards for code dating. Each manufacturer can use a different standard. (Some products may need to be thrown away after the date on the package; other products may be good for many years past the printed code date). For more product specific information, contact the manufacturer of the product.</p>
Best-By Date/ Use-By-Date	<p>The date beyond which the manufacturer does not guarantee acceptable quality and/or aesthetic standards; i.e., color changes, ingredient separation, etc., may begin to occur after this point in the life of product. Shelf-stable products having a shelf life of more than six months often have this type of dating.</p> <p>Even after these dates expire, a product should be safe, wholesome and of good quality if properly stored and maintained.</p>
Sell-By-Date/ Pull-By-Date	<p>The last date a product should be offered for sale allowing time for home use under proper storage conditions. The product should be purchased before this date expires. Generally used for perishable products such as meats, dairy, refrigerated juices, and fresh baked goods.</p>
Expiration/ Expiration Date	<p>The time beyond the Best-By, Use-By or Sell-by Date that generally describes when that product is no longer safe for human consumption. The term is also commonly used to describe Best-By, Use-By or Sell-by Date</p> <p>Under many circumstances, food that has passed the Best-By, Use-By or Sell-by-Date has not expired and can still be safe, wholesome and of good quality if properly stored and maintained. In some food manufacturing practices, the Expiration Date is used to express the last or final date a product should be used. Anything after this date should be thrown out as product can no longer be guaranteed safe for human consumption. An example of this may typically be seen with baby food.</p>



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Dry Shelf Stable Food

Canned Food	Unopened on shelf	Opened, refrigerated	Opened on shelf	
Canned goods, low acid	2-5 years	3-4 days		
(such as meat, poultry, fish, gravy, stew, soups, beans, carrots, corn, pasta, peas, potatoes, spinach)				
Canned goods, high acid	12-18 months	5-7 days		
(such as juices, fruit, pickles, sauerkraut, tomato, soup, and foods in vinegar-based sauce)				

Other Shelf Stable Food	Unopened on shelf	Opened, refrigerated	Opened on shelf	
Beans, dried	12 months		12 months	
Cereal				
Ready to eat	6-12 months		3 months	
Loose/bulk	2 years		6-12 months	
Instant	3 years		6-12 months	
Cookies, packaged	2 months	8-12 months frozen	4 weeks	
Crackers	8 months	freeze or refrig. 3-4 months	1 month	
Diet powder mixes	6 months		3 months	
Extracts, vanilla, lemon, etc.	3 years		1 year	
Fruits, dried	6 months	6 months		
Garlic, chopped, commercial jars	18 months	Refrigerate; use by date on jar		
Gelatin, flavored	18 months		Use all or reseal for 3- 4 months	
Gravy, jars & cans	2-5 years	1-2 days		
dry gravy mixes	2 years		Mix entire packet Store in cool dark place 1 year.	
Herbs, dried	1-2 years			
Honey	12 months		12 months	
Jams, jellies, preserves	12 months	6 months		
Juice, boxes	4-6 months	8-12 days		
Lentils, dried	12 months		12 months	
Maple syrup, pure genuine	12 months	12 months		
Marshmallows, marshmallow creme	2-4 months		1 month	
Milk, canned evaporated	12 months	4-5 days		
Mushrooms, dried	6 months		3 months	
Nuts, jars or cans	12 months	4-6 months, Freeze 9-12 months		
walnut, macadamia, other nut oils	6 months	4 months		



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Pasta, dry, made without eggs	2 years		1 year	
Dry egg noodles	2 years		1-2 months	
Peanut butter, commercial	6-9 months		2-3 months	
Peas, dried split	12 months		12 months	
Pectin	Use by package date		1 mo.	
Popcorn, dry kernels in jar	2 years		1 year	
commercially popped in bags	2-3 months		1-2 weeks	
Microwave packets	12 months		1-2 days popped	
Potato chips	2 months		1-2 weeks	
Potatoes, instant	6-12 months		6-12 months	
Pudding mixes	12 months		3-4 months	
Rice, white or wild	2 years		1 year	
Sauce mixes, non dairy (spaghetti, taco, etc.)	2 years		Use entire amt.	
Soup mixes	12 months		Use entire amt.	
Toaster pastries, fruit filled	6 months		Keep foil packets sealed	
non-fruit fillings	9 months			
Tomatoes, sun dried, packed in oil	12 months	6-12 months		
packed in cellophane	9 months		3-6 months	
Yeast, dry, packets and jars	Use-by date	Refrigerate open jars		
Water, bottled	1-2 years		3 months	
Coffee	Unopened on shelf	Opened, refrigerated	Opened on shelf	
Whole beans, non-vacuum bag	1-3 weeks	3-4 months frozen		
Ground, in cans	2 years	2 weeks		
Instant, jars and tins	12 months		2-3 months	
Soda				
such as carbonated cola drinks	Unopened on shelf	Opened, refrigerated	Opened on shelf	
Diet sodas, bottles or cans	3 months after date	2-3 days		
Regular sodas, bottles	3 months after date	2-3 days		
Regular sodas, cans	9 months after date	n.a.		
Baby Food (jars, cans, dry)	Unopened on shelf	Opened, refrigerated	Opened on shelf	
Fruits & vegetables	2 months after date	2-3 days		
Meats & eggs	2 months after date	1 day		
Cereal, dry mixes	Use-by date	2 months	2 months	
Formula	Use-by date	1-2 days		



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Baking Ingredients	Unopened on shelf	Opened, refrigerated	Opened on shelf
Baking powder	6 months		3 months
Baking soda	18 months		6 months
Biscuit or pancake mix	15 months		Pkg. use-by date
Cake, brownie and bread mixes	12-18 months		Pkg. use-by date
Cornmeal, regular de-germinated	6-12 months	12 months	
stone ground or blue	1 month	2-3 months	
Cornstarch	18 months		18 months
Flour, white	6-12 months		6-8 months
Flour, whole wheat	1 month	6-8 months	
Frosting, canned	10 months	1 week	
Frosting mixes	12 months		3 months
Chocolate, unsweetened and semi-sweet, solid	18-24 months		1 year
Chocolate syrup	2 years	6 months	
Cocoa and cocoa mixes	indefinitely		1 year
Shortening, solid	8 months		3 months
Sugar, brown	4 months		Sugar never spoils
Granulated	2 years		
Confectioners	18 months		
Sugar substitutes	2 years		
Syrup, pancake, maple & other flavors	12 months		12 months
Tapioca	12 months		12 months

Condiments	Unopened on shelf	Opened, refrigerated	Opened on shelf
Barbecue sauce, bottled	12 months	4 months	1 month
Catsup, tomato; cocktail sauce or chili sauce	12 months	6 months	1 month
Chutney	12 months	1-2 months	
Horseradish, in jar	12 months	3-4 months	
Mayonnaise, commercial	2-3 months	2 months	
Mustard	12 months	1 year	1-2 months
Olives, black and green	12 -18 months	2 weeks	
Pickles	12 months	1-2 months	
Salad dressings, commercial, bottled	10-12 months	3 months	
Salsa, picante and taco sauces	12 months	1 month	
Bacon Bits, imitation	4 months		4 months
Worcestershire sauce	1 year		1 year
Cream sauces with milk solids	1 year		
Oils, olive or vegetable	6 months		4-6 months
vegetable oil sprays	2 years		1 year



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Vinegar	2 years		12 months	
Spices, whole	2-4 years		Included in total	
ground	2-3 years		Included in total	
Paprika, red pepper, chili powder	2 years	Store in refrig.		
Flavoring or herb mixes	6 months		Use entire amt.	

BAKERY

Bakery items containing custards, meat or vegetables, and frostings made of cream cheese, whipped cream or eggs must be kept refrigerated. Bread products not containing these ingredients are safe at room temperature, but eventually they will mold and become unsafe to eat.

Bakery item	Shelf	Refrigerator	Freezer	
Bread, commercial	2-4 days	7-14 days	3 months	
Bread, flat (tortillas, pita)	2-4 days	4-7 days	4 months	
Cakes, Angel Food*	1-2 days	7 days	2 months	
Chiffon, sponge	1-2 days	7 days	2 months	
Chocolate	1-2 days	7 days	4 months	
Fruit cake	1 month	6 months	12 months	
Made from mix	3-4 days	7 days	4 months	
Pound cake	3-4 days	7 days	6 months	
Cheesecake	No	7 days	2-3 months	
Cookies, bakery or homemade	2-3 weeks	2 months	8-12 months	
Croissants, butter	1 day	7 days	2 months	
Doughnuts, glazed or cake	1-2 days	7 days	1 month	
Dairy, cream-filled	No	3-4 days	No	
Muffins	No	3-4 days	No	
Pastries, Danish	1-2 days	7 days	2 months	
Pies, cream	No	3-4 days	2 months	
Chiffon	No	1-2 days	No	
Fruit	1-2 days	7 days	No	
Mincemeat	1-2 days	7days	8 months	
Pecan	2 hours	3-4 days	8 months	
Pumpkin	2 hours	3-4 days	1-2 months	
Quiche	3-4 days	7 days	1-2 months	
Rolls, yeast, baked	Pkg. date	7 days	2 months	
filled, meat or vegetables	2 hours	3-4 days	2 months	
*Refrigerate any cake with frosting made of cream cheese, butter cream, whipped cream or eggs.				



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Produce

Raw fruits are safe at room temperature, but after ripening, will mold and rot quickly. For best quality, store ripe fruit in the refrigerator or prepare and freeze.

Fruits	Shelf	Refrigerator	Freezer
Apples	1-2 days	3 weeks	Cooked, 8 mos.
Apricots	Until ripe	2-3 days	No
Avocados	Until ripe	3-4 days	No
Bananas	Until ripe	2 days, skin will blacken	whole peeled, 1 month
Berries, cherries	No	1-2 days	4 months
Citrus fruit	10 days	1-2 weeks	No
Coconuts, fruits	1 week	2-3 weeks	Shredded, 6 months
Grapes	1 day	1 week	Whole, 1 mo.
Kiwi fruit	Until ripe	3-4 days	No
Melons	1-2 days	3-4 days	Balls, 1 mo.
Papaya, mango	3-5 days	1 week	No
Peaches, nectarines	Until ripe	3-4 days	Sliced, lemon juice & sugar, 2 months
Pears, plums	3-5 days	3-4 days	No
Artichokes, whole	1-2 days	1-2 weeks	No
Asparagus	No	3-4 days	8 months
Beans, green or wax	No	3-4 days	8 months
Beets	1 day	7-10 days	6-8 months
Cabbage	No	1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Carrots, parsnips	No	2 weeks	10-12 months
Celery	No	1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Cucumbers	No	4-5 days	No
Eggplant	1 day	3-4 days	6-8 months
Garlic, ginger root	2 days	1-2 weeks	1 month
Leeks	No	1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Lettuce, iceberg	No	1-2 weeks	No
Lettuce, leaf	No	3-7 days	No
Mushrooms	No	2-3 days	10-12 months
Okra	No	2-3 days	10-12 months
Onions, dry	2-3 weeks	2 months	10-12 months
Spring or green	No	1-2 weeks	
Peppers, bell or chili	No	4-5 days	6-8 months
Potatoes	1-2 months	1-2 weeks	Cooked, mashed 10-12 months
Rutabagas	1 week	2 weeks	8-10 months
Spinach	No	1-2 days	10-12 months
Squash, summer	No	4-5 days	10-12 months
Turnips	No	2 weeks	8-10 months
Tomatoes	Until ripe	2-3 days	2 months



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FROZEN

When shopping, place frozen foods in the cart last, immediately before checking out. Take the foods directly home and place in freezer. For storage of meat and poultry purchased frozen, see refrigerated foods chart.

Frozen item	Freezer	In refrigerator after thawing		
Bagels	2 months	1-2 weeks		
Bread dough, commercial	Use-by date	After baking, 4-7 days		
Burritos, sandwiches	2 months	3-4 days		
Egg substitutes	12 months	Date on carton		
Fish, breaded	3 months	Do not defrost. Cook frozen.		
Fish, raw	6 months	1-2 days		
Fruit such as berries, melons	4-6 months	4-5 days		
Guacamole	3-4 months	3-4 days		
Ice cream	2-4 months	Not applicable		
Juice concentrates	6-12 months	7-10 days		
Lobster tails	3 months	2 days		
Pancakes, waffles	2 months	3-4 days		
Sausages, uncooked	1-2 months	1-2 days		
precooked	1-2 months	7 days		
Sherbert, sorbet	2-4 months	Not applicable		
Shrimp, shellfish	12 months	1-2 days		
Topping, whipped	6 months	2 weeks		
TV dinners, entrees, breakfast	3 months	Do not defrost. Cook frozen.		
Vegetables	8 months	3-4 days		



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Perishables

Refrigerate foods to maintain quality as well as to keep them safe. Some bacteria grow and multiply -- although very slowly -- at refrigerated temperatures. There is a limit to the time various foods will stay fresh and safe in a refrigerator. Food kept continuously frozen at 0° F will always be safe but the quality suffers with lengthy freezer storage.

Product	Refrigerated	Frozen		
Beverages, fruit	3 weeks unopened			
Juice in cartons, fruit drinks, punch	7-10 days open	8-12 months		
Condiments				
Refrigerated pesto, salsa	Date on carton; 3 days after opening	1-2 months		
Sour cream-based dip	2 weeks	Doesn't freeze well		
Dairy products				
Butter	1-3 months	6-9 months		
Buttermilk	7-14 days	3 months		
Cheese, hard (such as cheddar, Swiss)	6 months unopened; 3-4 weeks opened	6 months		
Cheese, soft (such as Brie, Bel Paese)	1 week	6 months		
Cottage cheese, Ricotta	1 week	Doesn't freeze well		
Cream cheese	2 weeks	Doesn't freeze well		
Cream whipping, ultra pasteurized	1 months	Do not freeze		
Whipped, sweetened	1 day	1-2 months		
Aerosol can, real whipped cream	3-4 weeks	Do not freeze		
Aerosol can, non-dairy topping	3 months	Do not freeze		
Cream, Half and Half	3-4 days	4 months		
Egg, substitutes, liquid				
unopened	10 days	Do not freeze		
opened	3 days	Do not freeze		
Eggnog, commercial	3-5 days	6 months		
Eggs, in shell	3-5 weeks	Do not freeze		
Raw whites	2-4 days	12 months		
Raw yolks	2-4 days	Doesn't freeze well		
Margarine	4-5 months	12 months		
Milk	7 days	3 months		
Pudding	Package date; 2 days after opening	Do not freeze		
Sour cream	7-21 days	Doesn't freeze well		
Yogurt	7-14 days	1-2 months		
Deli foods				
Entrees, cold or hot	3-4 days	2-3 months		
Store-sliced lunch meats	3-5 days	1-2 months		
Salads	3-5 days	Do not freeze		



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Product	Refrigerated	Frozen		
Dough				
Tube cans of biscuits, rolls, pizza dough, etc.	Use-by date	Do not freeze		
Ready-to-bake pie crust	Use-by date	2 months		
Cookie dough	Use-by date, unopened or opened	2 months		
Pasta, fresh	1-2 days or use-by date on package	2 months		
Fresh Meat				
	Refrigerated	Frozen		
Beef, lamb, pork, or veal chops; Steaks, roasts	3-5 days	4-12 months		
Ground meat	1-2 days	3-4 months		
cooked meats (after home cooking)	3-4 days	2-3 months		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1-2 days	12 months		
Chicken or turkey, parts	1-2 days	9 months		
Duckling or goose, whole	1-2 days	6 months		
Giblets	1-2 days	3-4 months		
Processed meat				
	Refrigerated	Frozen		
Bacon	7 days	1 month		
Chicken				
Chicken nuggets, patties	1-2 days	1-3 months		
Cooked poultry dishes	3-4 days	4-6 months		
Fried chicken	3-4 days	4 months		
Rotisserie chicken	3-4 days	4 months		
Pieces covered with broth or gravy	1-2 days	6 months		
Corned beef, in pouch with pickling juices	5-7 days	1 month		
Ground turkey or chicken	1-2 days	3-4 months		
Ham, canned ("keep refig." label)	6-9 months	Not in can		
Ham, fully cooked, whole	7 days	1-2 months		
Ham, fully cooked, slices or halves	3-4 days	1-2 months		
Ham, cooked before eating	7 days	1-2 months		
Hot dogs, sealed in package	2 weeks	1-2 months		
Hot dogs, after opening	1 week	1-2 months		
Lunch meats, sealed in package	2 weeks	1-2 months		
Lunch meats, after opening	3-5 days	1-2 months		
Lunch meats, sealed in package	2 weeks	1-2 months		



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Lunch meats, after opening	3-5 days	1-2 months		
Sausage, raw, bulk type	1-2 days	1-2 months		
Sausage, smoked links, patties	7 days	1-2 months		
Sausage, hard, dry (pepperoni), sliced	2-3 weeks	1-2 months		
Fish/seafood	Refrigerated	Frozen		
Lean fish (cod, flounder, haddock, sole, etc.)	1-2 days	6 months		
Fatty fish (bluefish, mackerel, salmon, etc.)	1-2 days	2-3 months		
Caviar, non-pasteurized (fresh)	6 months unopened; 2 days after opening	Do not freeze		
Caviar, pasteurized, vacuum-packaged	1 year unopened; 2 days after opening	Do not freeze		
Cooked fish	3-4 days	4-6 months		
Smoked fish	14 days or date on vacuum pkg.	2 months in vacuum pkg.		
Shrimp, scallops, crayfish, squid	1-2 days	3-6 months		
Shucked clams, mussels and oysters	1-2 days	3-6 months		
Live clams, mussels, crab, lobster and oysters	2-3 days	2-3 months		
Cooked shellfish	3-4 days	3 months		



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