

## Keeping Food Safe

2010

Food needs to be properly stored, cooked and re-heated to make sure that it is safe to eat. Handling your food correctly will help ensure that you avoid becoming sick and that all the time, money and effort you put into your meals does not go to waste. Use these tips from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency to make sure you and your food stay healthy!

### When at the store...

- Buy cold and frozen food last.
- Make sure refrigerated food is cold to the touch.
- Frozen food should be rock solid.
- Never leave food in a hot car.
- Take food straight home to the refrigerator.
- Canned goods should be free of dents, cracks or bulging lids; these flaws may mean that there is a risk of food poisoning.

### When storing food...

- Put cold foods away in the refrigerator or freezer before storing your other purchases.
- If you bought meat, poultry or fish that you do not plan to use within 2 days freeze it immediately.
- When storing raw meat, poultry or fish in the fridge, put the packages on plates, in plastic containers or in freezer bags so their juices will not drip on to other foods.
- Check the temperature in your refrigerator.

### When cooking food...

- Cook everything completely! Always use a thermometer to be safe.
- Cook meat and poultry according to the “Safe Cooking Temperatures” chart below.

### **When preparing food...**

- Always wash hands in warm soapy water before touching any food.
- Thaw any frozen foods in the refrigerator. This can take up to 24 hours.
- Bacteria can live in kitchen towels, sponges and cloths; wash these often!
- Keep raw meat, poultry and fish and their juices away from other food.
- Wash your hands, cutting board and knives in hot soapy water and then rinse and then rinse again in bleach and water.

### **When serving food...**

- Never leave food out on the table or counter for more than two hours.
- Use clean dishes and utensils to serve food, not those you used when preparing or cooking.
- Pack lunches in insulated carriers with a cold pack.
- Carry picnic food in a cooler with a cold pack.

### **When handling leftover food...**

- Divide food into small, shallow containers – it will cool faster.
- If the food has not been out long, let it cool to room temperature (no longer than one hour), then refrigerate or freeze immediately.
- If your leftover poultry or meat is stuffed, remove the stuffing and store it separately.

### **When re-heating...**

- Check the “Cold Storage” table before eating; if the food has been stored for longer than recommended do not eat it.
- Never taste food that looks or smells strange after re-heating – it is safer to throw it away.
- Do not eat food with mould – it can make you sick.

### **When storing other items...**

- Household chemicals – including cleaning supplies – should be stored separately and away from food.
- Household pesticides should not be stored in the kitchen or in any other areas where food is stored.
- All dry goods, canned foods and other non-perishables should be stored in a clean, dry area that is not too bright.

## FOOD RECALLS

The **Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA)** is responsible for enforcing the regulations that keep food and drugs safe for Canadian consumers, as well as for labelling and packaging. The CFIA is also responsible for managing food- and drug-safety emergencies; they will issue advisories or recalls if unsafe, allergenic or contaminated foods or drugs are being sold to Canadians. To get a complete, up-to-date list of food **recalls and allergy alerts** visit the CFIA Food Recall Alerts Page:

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/corpafr/recarapp/recaltoce.shtml>

## COLD STORAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

The **Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care** offers the following recommendations for how long cold foods can be safely stored

Product	Variety	Fridge (4 °C)	Freezer (-18 °C)	
Eggs	Fresh, in shell	3 weeks	Do not freeze	
	Raw yolks or whites	2-4 days	4 months	
	Hard-cooked	1 week	Do not freeze	
	Liquid eggs or egg substitute	open	3 days	Do not freeze
		unopened	10 days	4 months
	Mayonnaise	2 months (at least)	Do not freeze	
Frozen dinners	Frozen casseroles	Keep frozen until ready to serve	3-4 months	
Deli and Vacuum-Packed Products	Store prepared (or homemade) egg, chicken, tuna, ham, macaroni, salads	2-3 days	These products do not freeze well	
	Stuffed pork or lamb chops, stuffed chicken breasts	1 day	These products do not freeze well.	
	Store-cooked convenience meals	1-2 days	These products do not freeze well	
	Commercial brand vacuum-packed dinners	2 weeks (unopened)	These products do not freeze well	
Soups and Stews	Vegetable or meat-added	3-4 days	2-3 months	
Meat	Ground turkey, veal, pork, lamb, beef or mix; stewing meats	1-2 days	3-4 months	
Hot Dogs	open package	1 week	In freezer wrap, 1-2 months	
	unopened package	2 weeks		
Lunch Meats	All - opened	3-5 days	In freezer wrap, 1-2 months	
	All - unopened	2 weeks		
Seafood	all	1-2 days	4-6 months	

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Independent Living Canada / Vie autonome Canada

402-214 chemin Montréal Road • Ottawa • Ontario • K1L 8L8

Tel/Tél: 613.563.2581 • Fax/Télé.: 613.563.3861 • TTY/ATS: 613.563.4215

[www.ilcanada.ca](http://www.ilcanada.ca) / [www.vacanada.ca](http://www.vacanada.ca) • email/courriel: [info@ilc-vac.ca](mailto:info@ilc-vac.ca) / [info@vac-ilc.ca](mailto:info@vac-ilc.ca)

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## SAFE COOKING TEMPERAURES

The **Canadian Food Inspection Agency** recommends that meat be cooked according to the chart below in order to minimize the risk of food-borne illness:

MEAT	CUT	INTERNAL TEMPERATURE	
		Celsius	Fahrenheit
Ground meat	Turkey, chicken,	74°	165°
	Veal, beef, lamb, pork	71°	160°
Beef	All cuts	63-77°	145-170°
Veal	All cuts	63-77°	145-170°
Lamb/Goat	All cuts	63-77°	145-170°
Pork	Pieces and whole cuts	71°	160°
Poultry	Chicken, whole	85°	185°
	Turkey, whole	85°	185°
	Poultry breasts, thighs, wings (pieces)	74°	165°
	Stuffing	74°	165°
	Duck, goose, pheasant	82°	180°
	Egg dishes	74°	165°

**Health Canada wants you to REMEMBER:  
Your burger's done at seventy-one (71°)!**

### IS IT FOOD POISONING?

- It is not always easy to tell – symptoms can appear anywhere from 30 minutes to two weeks later. Most often people will get sick within 4 to 48 hours after eating bad food.
- If you develop nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever or cramps, you could have food poisoning.
- If symptoms are severe, call your doctor or go to the hospital right away
- For more information about food poisoning, call your local public health department.