Storing Food in Your Refrigerator

Your refrigerator is designed to help prolong the storage life of fresh and cooked foods. Each compartment’s specialized zones along with a constant cold temperature delays the onset of food spoilage – particularly the metabolic growth of bacteria, molds and yeasts causing chemical and physical changes.

General Fresh Food Care

The quality of food before being placed in the refrigerator is critical to successful storage. This determines how long foods stay fresh for, and how long they can be kept refrigerated.

For Best Results:

- Only select foods of high quality and freshness.
- Only purchase foods you plan to use within the recommended storage time. If extra is purchased, plan to freeze the foods.
- Before storing foods, ensure they are wrapped in suitable packing material.
  - This will prevent food from dehydrating, deteriorating in color or losing flavor and will help maintain freshness. It will also prevent odor transfer.
  - Fruit and vegetables do not require wrapping and are recommended to be stored in the vegetable bins of the refrigerator.
- Ensure perishable foods are stored in the refrigerator immediately after purchase; this will prolong their shelf life. Storing at room temperature increases the rate of deterioration.
• Avoid placing food directly in front of air outlets; this may freeze foods and decrease the efficiency of cold air in the refrigerator to maintain safe food storage.

• Keep door openings to a minimum and do not open unnecessarily.

• Ensure hot foods and drinks are cooled sufficiently before placing them in the refrigerator. Hot foods may cause other foods to warm to unsafe temperatures. If in contact with plastic components of your refrigerator, hot containers may cause damage. Additionally hot foods may cause an increase in energy consumption.

• Ensure raw and cooked foods are stored in separate air tight containers to prevent cross contamination. We recommend storing raw foods on the bottom shelf of the refrigerator.

• Keep the refrigerator clean by frequently wiping the inside walls and shelves (refer to ‘Cleaning care’ section).

• Pay attention to the quality of foods in your refrigerator.
  ◦ Discard food that show signs of spoilage (by visual inspection and odor).
  ◦ Pay particular attention to protein rich foods (meats, fish and poultry) as some deteriorate faster than others.
  ◦ Use foods within the recommended storage dates.

Dairy Foods and Eggs

• We recommend high-in-fat dairy products eg butter, cheeses be stored in the covered door shelves of the refrigerator as these foods are easily tainted by strong odorous foods.

• We recommend eggs be stored in the covered door shelves of the refrigerator or in their carton as the porous egg structure is susceptible to absorbing odors.
  ◦ When using eggs in baked goods it is ideal to use room temperature eggs. Be sure to remove the required eggs 2 hours beforehand.

• Ensure pre-packed dairy products stamped with recommended ‘use by/best before/best by’ dates are consumed within the recommended storage time.

• Ensure dairy products are stored in their original packaging until ready to consume. Once opened, package any remaining in suitable packing material eg cling film to avoid the transfer of odors.

Precooked Foods and Leftovers

• Ensure cooked foods are stored in suitable covered containers, this will prevent foods from drying out.

• Keep for only 1 – 2 days.

• Reheat leftovers only once and until steaming hot.

Red Meats

• Ensure raw and cooked foods are stored in separate air tight containers to prevent cross contamination from the loss of raw meat juices.

• Ensure delicatessen meats are consumed within the recommended storage time. These can be stored in the slim storage bin if you want to keep separate

Poultry

• Keep whole poultry or poultry pieces in the original packaging until just before use.

• We recommend placing the packaged poultry in a dish and storing on the bottom shelf of your refrigerator to prevent any potential spills from contaminating other foods.
Whole poultry or poultry pieces should only be stuffed right before cooking. Preparation in advance may result in food poisoning.

- Ensure stuffing is removed from cooked poultry, and both are sufficiently cooled then covered before storing in the refrigerator.

**Fish and Seafood**

- Whole fish and filets are ideally consumed on the day of purchase. Ensure they are stored in suitable covered containers or packaging, this will prevent foods from drying out and transferring odors.
- If storing overnight or longer, ensure whole fish is cleaned and dried before covering and storing, preferably on a bed of ice, in your refrigerator.
- Ensure fish filets and other seafood are treated the same way.
- Keep shellfish chilled at all times and consume within 1 – 2 days.

**Fruit and Vegetables**

- Not all fruit and vegetables are suitable for prolonged refrigeration storage at temperatures below 41°F (5°C). Undesirable physical and chemical changes will result from low temperature storage, such as loss of rigidity, browning, increased rate of deterioration and potential loss of flavor.
- Try to store fruit and vegetables separately, as each emit different ethylene levels – the cause of ripening.
- Ensure fruits are not washed before storage, this increases the rate of deterioration.
- Ensure vegetables are sorted and damaged parts are discarded.

**Beverages**

- Ensure beverages are stored tightly on the door shelves of the refrigerator. This prevents the bottles from tipping or falling out when the refrigerator door is opened. Otherwise use bottle holders to store beverages on the shelves.
- The door shelves are held by support lugs and are fully adjustable to suit your storage requirements.