Properly storing foods can help maintain their quality. Make sure perishable foods never sit out of refrigeration for more than two hours, and follow the expiration dates to ensure taste and safety. If no expiration date is available on the package, the following refrigeration guidelines provide a helpful gauge. Freezing is also a smart storage option for shoppers who wish to extend the shelf life of perishable foods beyond their expiration dates. But whether you’re freezing or refrigerating, one basic rule applies: When in doubt, throw it out!

### Perishable Foods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meat (BEEF, PORK, VEAL, LAMB)</th>
<th>Refrigerator (below 40°F)</th>
<th>Freezer (at or below 0°F)</th>
<th>Perishable Foods</th>
<th>Refrigerator (below 40°F)</th>
<th>Freezer (at or below 0°F)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bacon</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Perishable Foods</td>
<td>Refrigerator (below 40°F)</td>
<td>Freezer (at or below 0°F)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sausage (meat or poultry)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Giblets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground meat</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POULTRY (CHICKEN, TURKEY)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry, whole</td>
<td>1 to 2 days</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poultry, pieces (breasts, thighs, wings)</td>
<td>1 to 2 days</td>
<td>9 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giblets</td>
<td>1 to 2 days</td>
<td>3 to 4 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground poultry</td>
<td>3 to 4 days</td>
<td>4 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOT DOGS, LUNCH MEAT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hot dogs - uncooked</td>
<td>1 to 2 days</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch meat - unopened</td>
<td>3 to 5 days</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGGS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh, in shell</td>
<td>3 to 5 weeks</td>
<td>Do not freeze</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg whites and yolks (raw)</td>
<td>2 to 4 days</td>
<td>1 year</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egg substitutes</td>
<td>3 days</td>
<td>10 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** All recommendations assume refrigerators are set below 40°F and freezers are set to 0°F.

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BACON, SAUSAGE

- Bacon
  - opened
  - unopened
  - 1 week
  - 2 weeks
  - 1 month

- Sausage (meat or poultry)
  - raw
  - pre-cooked/smoked
  - 1 to 2 days
  - 1 week
  - 1 to 2 months

- Summer sausage labeled “Keep Refrigerated”
  - opened
  - unopened
  - 3 weeks
  - 3 months
  - 1 to 2 months

- Pepperoni, sliced
  - 2 to 3 weeks
  - 1 to 2 months

HAM, CORNED BEEF

- Corned beef (in pouch with pickling juices)
  - 5 to 7 days
  - Drained, 1 month

- Fresh ham, uncooked
  - 3 to 5 days
  - 5 to 7 days
  - 6 months
  - 3 to 4 months

- Ham, fully cooked, store wrapped
  - whole
  - half
  - slices
  - 1 week
  - 3 to 5 days
  - 3 to 4 days
  - 1 to 2 months

- Ham, fully cooked, vacuum sealed
  - undated, unopened
  - dated, unopened
  - 2 weeks
  - Use-by date
  - 1 to 2 months

- Ham, canned (labeled “Keep Refrigerated”)
  - opened
  - unopened
  - 1 week
  - 6 to 9 months
  - Do not freeze

DAIRY

- Cheese, hard or processed
  - opened
  - unopened
  - 3 to 4 weeks
  - 6 months

- Cheese, soft
  - 1 week
  - 6 months

- Cottage/ricotta cheese
  - 1 week
  - Do not freeze

- Cream cheese
  - 2 weeks
  - Do not freeze

- Butter
  - 1 to 3 months
  - 6 to 9 months