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REFRIGERATOR TIPS

SELECTION AND STORAGE

► Fruits and vegetables (fresh, cooked, or cut)

- Buy in season to improve quality and save money.
Buy Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in Season! <http://extension.msstate.edu/publications/buy-fresh-fruits-vegetables-season>
- Store in separate crisper drawers to keep fresh longer.
- Keep leftover cut pieces in plastic bags or containers to keep fresh longer.
- Choose juices that are labeled 100% fruit or vegetable juice. Store these in the door of the refrigerator.

► Meats, poultry, seafood, and eggs (fresh or cooked)

- Choose lean or remove the skin and fat when possible.
- Store raw items on the bottom shelf, separately from fruits, vegetables, and prepared foods.
- Place on trays or in containers to keep juices from dripping onto other foods.
- Keep eggs in the carton for longer freshness. Store on a lower shelf in case one is cracked.

► Dairy (milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, cream cheese, cheese, sour cream, butter)

- Choose low-fat.
- Choose low-sugar.
- Store milk on a lower shelf at the back where the refrigerator is coldest. Store all other dairy products at the back on a middle shelf.



► Prepared and cooked foods

- Keep prepared salads, dips, and snacks in plastic bags or containers with lids.
- Label and date prepared and cooked dishes and leftovers.
- Keep prepared and cooked foods on the upper shelf away from raw meats and eggs.

► Fresh herbs

- Store fresh herbs from the store in their original packaging.
- Wrap fresh herbs from the garden or unpackaged store-bought herbs in a paper towel and place in a plastic bag.

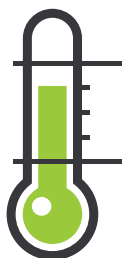
► Condiments

- Store salad dressing and other condiments in the door of the refrigerator.



SAFETY

Temperature



- Keep refrigerator temperature below **40°F** (ideally 34–38°F).
- Remember the danger zone is 40–140°F. This is the temperature where bacteria grow most rapidly.

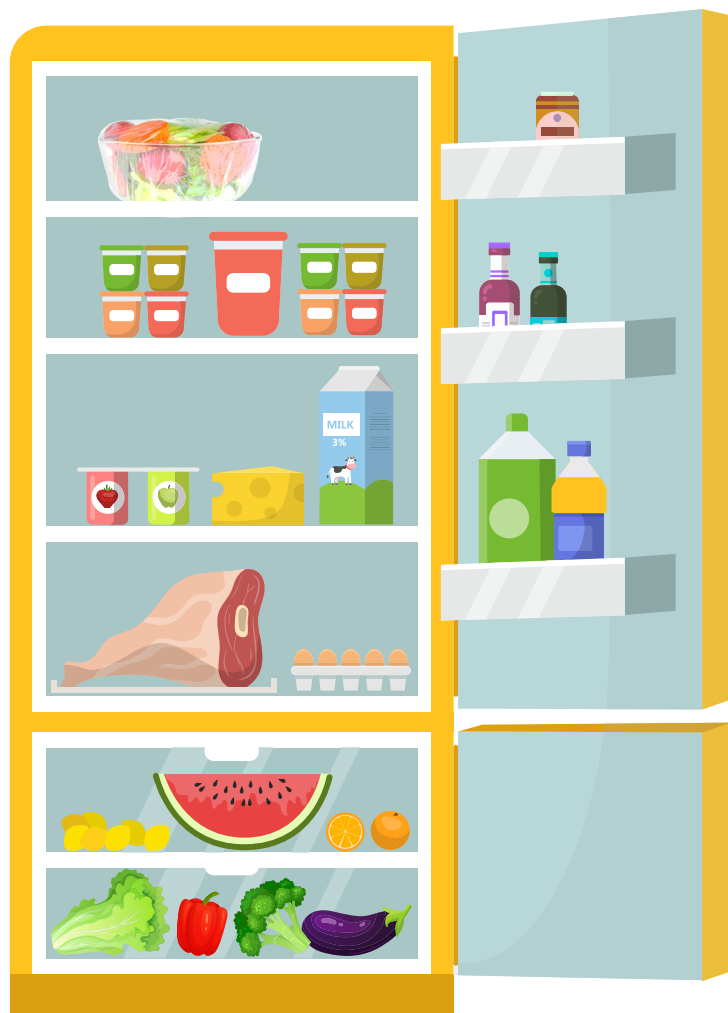


DANGER ZONE

Time



- Refrigerate all foods as soon as possible.
- Do not keep perishable foods at room temperature longer than 2 hours.
- Safely store cooked leftovers in the refrigerator for 3–4 days.
- Safely store raw ground meats for 1–2 days.
- Label and date containers of stored leftover foods.
- Make sure to use recommended refrigeration times as a guide. If a food no longer looks fresh, do not use it.



Cleanliness

- Clean out your refrigerator once a week.
- Before throwing away a moldy item, wrap it to prevent spreading the mold. Clean the shelf or container where the moldy item was. Check nearby foods for signs of mold.
- Place an open box of baking soda on one of the shelves to keep your refrigerator smelling fresh.
- Do not use cleaners that will leave a strong chemical odor or affect food taste.

Additional Tip

Avoid storing too many items in your refrigerator. Without open space, cold air cannot circulate. Food will not stay cold enough.



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