Kane County Health Department

1240 N. Highland Ave., Suite 5
Aurora, IL 60506
Phone (630) 444-3040
Fax (630) 897-8123

115 S. Grove Ave., Suite 209
Elgin, IL 60120
Phone (847) 608-2850
Fax (847) 888-6458

Food Safety Tips

Here's How Long Some Popular Foods Should Be Kept

•Refrigerator temperatures should be 41°F or below
•Freezer temperatures should be 0°F or below

Product	Storage Period In Refrigerator	Storage Period In Freezer
Fresh Meat		
Beef: Ground	1-2 days	3-4 months
Beef: Steaks and roasts	3-5 days	6-12 months
Pork: Chops	3-5 days	4-6 months
Pork: Ground	1-2 days	3-4 months
Pork: Roasts	3-5 days	4-6 months
Fish: Lean (such as cod, flounder, haddock)	1-2 days	up to 6 months
Fish: Fatty (such as blue, perch, salmon)	1-2 days	2-3 months
Chicken: Whole	1-2 days	12 months

Chicken: Parts	1-2 days	9 months
Chicken: Giblets	1-2 days	3-4 months
Cured Meats		
Lunch meat	3-5 days	1-2 months
Sausage	1-2 days	1-2 months
Gravy	1-2 days	2-3 months
Dairy Products		
Cheese: Swiss, brick, and processed	3-4 weeks	0
Milk	5 days (up to expiration date)	1 month
Ice cream, ice milk	—	2-4 months
Eggs: Fresh in shell	3 weeks	—
Eggs: Hard-boiled	1 week	—

* Cheese can be frozen, but freezing will affect the texture and taste.

Sources: ***Food Marketing Institute*** for fish and dairy products, **USDA** for all other foods.

The Facts about Food Product Dating

Food Product dating tells people certain information about specific foods, but there is no uniform or universally accepted dating system in the United States. Except for infant formula and some baby foods, product dating is not required by federal regulations. The following definitions should help you understand the dates that are voluntarily printed on various food products:

- **"sell by":** Tells the store how long to display the product for sale. Consumers should not buy the product after this date.
- **"best if used by (or before)":** Tells consumers how long the product will retain its best flavor or quality. (This is not a purchase or safety date!)
- **"use by":** Tells consumers the last date that is recommended for using the product while at peak quality. The manufacturer determines this date.
- **"closed or coded":** Represents packing numbers for use by the manufacturer to track inventory, rotate stock or locate the product in case of a problem. (These are the numbers found on the lids of canned foods.) These dates do not indicate freshness or quality of the product.

Remember: When in doubt, throw it out!