

# Food safety

Food borne illnesses can affect us more as we age. Safe food handling is essential for preventing the spread of germs in the kitchen.

## Use-by dates

Foods that must be eaten before a certain time for health or safety reasons should be marked with a use-by date. Foods should not be eaten after the use-by date and can't legally be sold after this date.

## Best-before dates

Most foods have a best-before date. You can still safely eat foods after their best-before date, but they may have lost some quality.

## Golden rules for keeping food safe

Food safety is important to maintaining good health. The following key tips will help you keep your food safe:

- 1. Keep it cold**
  - Keep your fridge below 5°C
- 2. Keep it hot**
  - Cook and reheat foods to at least 60°C
- 3. Keep it clean**
  - Wash your hands thoroughly before you start preparing food
- 4. Check the label**
  - Don't eat food past a 'use-by' date
- 5. Food poisoning**
  - Older adults with certain underlying conditions may be more vulnerable to food poisoning

### ★ Tip

For more information on the tips for keeping food safe, visit the food authority website at: [www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au](http://www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au)

## Freezing food

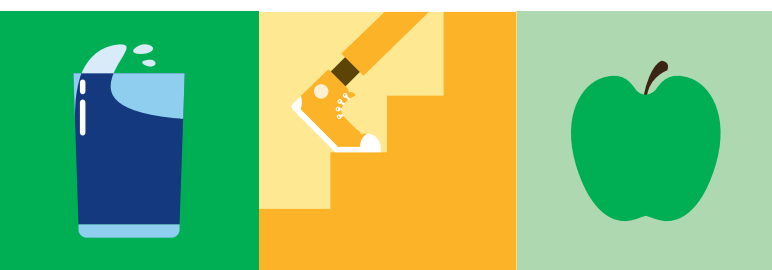
Freeze food in meal-sized portions in airtight containers or freezer bags and mark items with the date.

Below are the recommended maximum storage times for different foods at -18°C. Food will not be unsafe after these timeframes but the quality and texture will begin to deteriorate.

Raw meat / chicken / fish	
Sausages	2 months
Mince	3 months
Poultry pieces, fish and seafood	4 months
Steak, chops, whole chicken	6 months
Cooked food	
Cooked chicken, cured meat	1 month
Stock	2 months
Soup, pies, pastries, casseroles	2-3 months
Stewed fruit, cooked legumes	6 months
Other	
Milk	1 month
Butter, margarine	4 months
Cheese (best frozen grated)	5 months
Bread, nuts, pastry	6 months

Your freezer manufacturer may list recommended storage times in the door or lid of your freezer.

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# Shop smart, shop healthy

Take time to plan your meals and stick to a budget. It can save both time and money when grocery shopping.

There's no need to spend a fortune to eat well. Here are some helpful tips for preparing tasty and nutritious meals on a budget.

## 1. Plan a regular shop and write a shopping list

Having healthy food ready in the house makes it a lot easier to put together a healthy snack or meal. Convenience and take-away food can be easy to pick up on the way home, but tend to cost more and contain high amounts of salt, saturated fat and sugar. By planning a regular shop and writing a shopping list, you can keep your pantry full of healthy food and avoid last-minute impulse buys.

## 2. Shop wisely

- When shopping for fresh fruit and vegetables, look for those with the best price or those that are on special.
- Try not to shop when you're hungry.
- Review the shopping catalogue, supermarket emails and supermarket apps to find the best prices and specials.
- Compare brands using unit pricing to find the most cost effective option (i.e. cost per 100g/100mL or per kg/L).



## 3. Use your label reading skills to make healthy choices

When buying packaged food, like cereal, dairy products and canned foods, use your label reading guide or the Health Star Rating to select healthier options.

## 4. Use frozen and canned foods

Frozen and canned vegetables and fruit are just as nutritious as fresh. When buying canned vegetables and fruit, buy varieties with no added salt or sugar if available.

## 5. Reduce food waste and freeze leftovers

- When you cook a healthy meal, cook to instructions and if you have leftovers, freeze them in meal-sized portions so you have quick and easy meals ready in the freezer.
- You can then add leftovers to a toasted sandwich, or serve them with a different base (such as couscous, mash potato or noodles) or with vegetables on the side (such as peas, broccoli or green beans).
- Mark frozen items with the date and use them within the recommended storage time.
- Freeze food in airtight containers or zip lock bags to keep food safe. Write the date on the container or bag so you can keep track of how long they have been stored.
- Freeze sliced wholegrain bread and take out slices when you need them to prevent waste.
- Freeze meat, chicken and fish in meal-sized portions so they are ready to cook.

## 6. Cook at home

Convenience and take-away food tends to cost more so it will save you money to prepare meals and snacks at home. You can save money and make healthier meals by cutting back on saturated fat, added salt and added sugar in your home cooking. Don't be put off by TV cooking shows that make every meal look like it's from a restaurant – simple meals can be family favourites.

# Shopping list

Below is a list of pantry, fridge and freezer staples to add to your shopping list to ensure you always have healthy food available.

## Pantry

- Breakfast cereals (choose wholegrain, untoasted varieties with or without traditional dried fruits (e.g. sultanas/raisins) – check labels)
- Canned fruit (in natural juice) and traditional dried fruits (without added sugar/syrup)
- Canned vegetables (e.g. tomatoes, corn, beetroot – choose no added salt if available)
- Nuts and seeds (includes nut spreads such as peanut butter – choose unsalted, unsweetened, natural varieties)
- Canned legumes (e.g. chickpeas/bean mix/lentils/baked beans – choose no added salt if available)
- Wholegrain crackers
- Herbs, spices, pepper, cooking oil
- Grains (e.g. rice, pasta, couscous, noodles – choose wholegrain and/or high fibre where possible)
- Long life/UHT milk (or nut and cereal plant-based milks with added calcium)

## Fridge

- Milk, yoghurt and cheese (choose reduced fat if available)
- Eggs
- Fresh fruit and vegetables (look for the best price to reduce cost)
- Spreads (e.g. margarine, hummus, tzatziki, avocado)

## Freezer

- Wholemeal/wholegrain bread
- Frozen fruit and vegetables
- Lean cuts of meat and fish (buy in bulk and freeze in portions)
- Frozen meals for emergencies (use label reading skills to select healthier options)



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# Money saving tips and tricks

1. What foods do you always have on your shopping list or in your pantry, fridge and freezer?

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2. Do you have any tips for budgeting?

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