**Food Handlers’ Storage Guide**

General guidelines for the shelf life of common foods. Read the label and check for “best before” dates. Most foods, except those marked with an “expiry date,” are safe to eat if stored longer, but flavor and nutritional value will deteriorate. Discard if there is any sign of spoilage.

### Cupboard (room temperature)
- Unless otherwise specified, times apply to unopened packages.

#### CEREAL GRAINS
- Once opened, store in airtight containers, away from light and heat.
  - Bread Crumbs (dry) …………………… 3 months
  - Cornmeal ………………………… 8 months
  - Crackers ………………………… 6 months
  - Pasta ……………………………… several years
  - Rice ……………………………… several years
  - Rolled oats ……………………….. 6-10 months
  - White flour ……………………….. 1 year
  - Whole wheat flour …………………. 3 months

### Refrigerator (4°C, 40°F)
- Unless otherwise specified, cover all foods.

#### DAIRY PRODUCTS AND EGGS
- (check “best before” dates)
  - Butter - unopened …………………… 8 weeks
  - Cheese - cottage (once opened) ………… 3 days
  - Eggs ……………………………… 3-4 weeks
  - Margarine ……………………….. 1 month
  - Milk, cream, yogurt (once opened) …….. 3 days

#### FISH AND SHELLFISH
- Clams, crab, lobster, mussels (live) ……… 12-24 hours
  - Oysters (live) ……………………… 24 hours
  - Scallops, shrimp (raw) ………………… 1-2 days
  - Shellfish (cooked) …………………… 1-2 days

### Freezer (-18°C, 0°F)
- Use freezer wrapping or airtight containers.
- Freeze fresh food at its peak condition.

#### FISH AND SHELLFISH
- Fish (fat species: lake trout, mackerel, salmon) ……… 2 months
  - Fish (lean species: cod, haddock, tilapia, smelt) ……… 6 months
  - Shellfish ………………………… 2-4 months

#### MEAT, POULTRY AND EGGS
- Uncooked
  - Beef, roasts, steaks …………………... 10-12 months
  - Chicken, turkey - cut up ……………... 6 months
  - Ground beef ……………………… 1 year
  - Cured or smoked meat ………………... 1-2 months
  - Duck, goose ……………………….. 3 months
  - Eggs (white, yellow) ………………… 4 months
  - Ground meat ……………………… 2-3 months
  - Lamb, chops, roasts ………………….. 8-12 months
  - Pork (chops, roasts) ………………….. 8-12 months
  - Sausages, Wieners …………………….. 2-3 months
  - Variety meats, giblets ………………… 3-4 months
  - Veal (chops, roasts) …………………... 8-12 months
  - Cooked
  - All meat ………………………… 2-3 months
  - All poultry ……………………….. 1-3 months
  - Casserole, meat pies ………………… 3 months

#### MISCELLANEOUS FOODS
- Beans, lentils, peas, corn, potatoes ……… 3-6 months
- Bread (baked or unbaked, yeast) ………… 1 month
- Cakes, cookies (baked) ………………….. 4 months
- Herbs …………………………….. 1 year
- Pastries, quick bread (baked) …………... 1 month
- Pastry crust (unbaked) …………………. 2 months
- Pie, fruit, unbaked ……………………… 6 months
- Sandwiches, rolls, rolls …………………. 6-8 weeks
- Soups (stocks, cream) ……………………. 4 months

### TO LEARN MORE
To learn more about food safety, please contact an Environmental Health Officer at the nearest Government Service Centre, or an Environmental Health Program Manager with the Regional Health Authority, or you can visit www.canfoodbc.org

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**Newfoundland Labrador**
- Department of Health and Community Services
- Department of Government Services
- Regional Health Authorities

**Ontario**
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