

tasty times

important updates for success and more resources from the child care healthy food program

“REDUCE
FOOD
WASTE”

Dear Child Care Provider,

In most developed countries, more than 50 percent of all food waste takes place in the home. Food waste can be caused by over-purchasing and throwing away old leftovers. It can also be caused by discarding food that has passed the “expiration” date, does not look appetizing anymore, and/or is no longer safe to eat. Preventing food waste not only helps you save money, it also helps the economy and environment by conserving energy and resources used for food processing. This issue of Tasty Times provides tips on extending food shelf life at home to help you save money, prevent food spoilage, food-related illness, and food waste.

—Tran Huynh, UIC Dietetic Intern

What Is Food Spoilage?

Food spoilage happens when a food has undesirable changes in appearance, texture, smell, and taste that make it unfit to eat. Light, oxygen, humidity, temperature, and microorganisms and their waste products can all affect both safety and quality of foods. In addition, some types of spoilage can be caused by pathogenic bacteria and result in serious health issues.

How to tell when food is spoiled

Look for the appearance of:

- abnormal color change;
- abnormal solids and/or bubbles;
- green, white or blue spots on food surface; and
- signs of swelling or damage on canned foods.

Taste and odor:

- Throw it out if the food smells bad, unusual, or sour.

Feel:

- Check if the texture of the food has changed: slimy, dry, mushy, etc.

Here are tips to avoid food spoilage and make your food last longer:

1. Inventory check and plan before you cook to avoid overbuying and wasting food.
2. Check the temperatures: the freezer should be 0°F or less, the refrigerator should be 40°F or less.
3. Seal to avoid cross contamination using plastic wrap, bags, or containers.
4. Label food with dates using paper stickers or wet-erase markers with the date of storage and/or expected expiration dates.
5. Read packages and look for expiration dates and directions for how to best store the food. When in doubt, use the smell test. Foods with “use by” dates are easily spoiled and must be eaten before the date written. Foods with “best before” dates can be eaten after the date on the packaging however, it might not be at its best quality.
6. Cook food before refrigerating or freezing because cooking food kills unwanted microorganisms to prevent them from reproducing.
7. Cool food before storage because hot food will warm up the foods around it and raise the temperature inside the refrigerator.
8. Glass containers are best because they are easier to clean



Welcome New Providers

Maria Escobar
Simone Gatlin
Shimera Jones
Mary Lee
Jacklyn Polk
Alecia Rawlings
Antionette Robinson
Kimberly Wide
Maria Zamora

Continued

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Attention Providers! New Change—Reduced Number of Infant Groups

Effective October 1st, 2017, the new CACFP meal pattern went into effect for the Healthy Food Program. As part of these changes, the USDA has reduced the number of infant groups from 3 (0-3 months, 4-7 months, and 8-11 months) to 2 (0-5 months and 6-11 months). Infants 6-11 months are expected to receive foods from all food groups at meals and snacks once the child is developmentally ready to receive them.

It is the expectation that children 8 months and older are developmentally ready to receive all foods. If you have a child that is not developmentally ready or a child whose parents do not believe is developmentally ready at 8 months of age, please notify the Healthy Food Program.

Remember, **July** claims are due in our office by **August 5th!**

Warning! Late claims WILL result in late payment!

Reminder

The Illinois State Board of Education will be conducting unannounced child care home reviews during meal times this summer and fall. If you receive a visit, always check for identification and feel free to call us if you are doubtful of the person at your door. You or your assistant cannot ask the ISBE monitor to come back later; you or your assistant must conduct the review. The purpose of the ISBE review is to monitor Illinois Action for Children's Healthy Food Program. ISBE is required to do this for all food programs by the United States Department of Agriculture. Be sure to call us if you are going to be closed or away during a meal time and we will inform the ISBE monitor if he or she is at your door and you do not answer.

What Is Food Spoilage?

Continued

than plastic. Plastic containers are porous which can allow microorganisms to cling on, reproduce, and thus, food spoil faster.

9. Don't let food sit out because room temperature is the perfect temperature for bacteria to grow. Store food in the refrigerator within an hour or so after being cooked. When reheating the food, make sure it is steaming hot all the way through.
10. First in first out means eating and using foods that are older first.
11. Out of sight, out of mind means keeping foods that spoil quickly in visible, easy to reach parts of the fridge.
12. Wait to wash veggies and fruits until you are ready to use them.
13. Store fruits and vegetables separately because fruits give off a ripening agent (ethylene) that will make vegetables stored with them spoil faster.
14. Look on the internet (e.g. the FDA Refrigerator and Freezer Storage Chart) when you are unsure how long the food will last in the fridge or freezer.

Understanding the best ways to store food and how to identify food spoilage helps child care providers provide high quality and safe meals to the children. These tips will also help you save money and prevent food waste.

List of foods that spoil the fastest

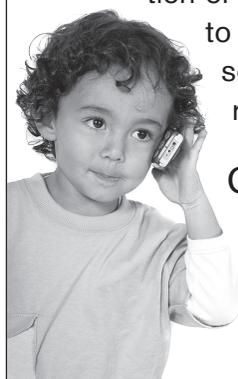
- Berries
- Bananas
- Nectarines (e.g. peaches, plums)
- Bagged greens (e.g. lettuce, spinach, kale)
- Mushrooms
- Asparagus
- Broccoli
- Raw meats, especially fish and seafood
- Milk

List of fruits and vegetables that have a longer shelf life

- Beets
- Potatoes
- Carrots
- Celery
- Winter Squash
- Cabbage
- Garlic
- Onion
- Apples
- Citrus (e.g. oranges, grapefruits, tangerines, lemons)

Healthy Food Program Number

For the Out of Home voicemail, payment information or to speak to a customer service representative:



Call:
**(773)
564-8861**



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