



# Food Safety for Food Pantries

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City of Milwaukee Health Department

# Licensing and Inspections

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- The State Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) does not require food pantries to be licensed, but DATCP does encourage local inspection programs to inspect pantries and community food programs.
- The City of Milwaukee has an ordinance requiring food pantry/food program inspections
- If inspected, the inspections will be based on the requirements in the Wisconsin Food Code :  
[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/FoodCode.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/FoodCode.aspx)



- Best policy would be to not accept any foods prepared in a private home.
- Do not accept home canned, smoked or vacuum sealed foods.

## Botulism outbreak linked to home-canned peas

Published on April 2, 2019 by [BARBARA H INGHAM](#)



On June 6, 2018, at 1:30 p.m., the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene was notified of **three related women who had arrived at a hospital** four hours earlier for evaluation for **acute nausea, dizziness, blurred vision, slurred speech, drooping eyelids, thick-feeling tongue, and shortness of breath**. Within hours, **all three patients developed respiratory failure**, requiring insertion of a breathing tube. The combination of symptoms suggested **botulism**, a paralytic illness caused by botulinum neurotoxin, most commonly produced by *Clostridium botulinum*.

# Temperature and Receiving

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- Refrigerated foods are to be 41°F or below. Use a thermometer to check the temperature of all refrigerated food
- Frozen Foods: Frozen solid
- Move cold food directly into the refrigerator or freezer first






# Sound Condition


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- Do not accept foods if evidence of being subjected to flood or fire damage.
- Defective cans may leak and allow microorganisms to enter that may cause food borne illness.

<https://www.afdo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Defect-Guidelines-Document.pdf>



**Packaged and Canned Food Defect Guidelines**



Prepared by:  
AFDO Food Recovery Committee

**2021**

Contact AFDO  
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afdo@afdo.org

# Product Dating

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- Except for infant formula, product dating is not required by Federal regulations.

Examples of commonly used phrases:

- A "**Best if Used By/Before**" date indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- A "**Sell-By**" date tells the store how long to display the product for sale for inventory management. It is not a safety date.
- A "**Use-By**" date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. It is not a safety date except for when used on infant formula as described below.
- A "**Freeze-By**" date indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.





# Safe and Healthy Food Pantries Project

## Division of Extension

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### Safe and Healthy: Food Product Dating

These are recommendations only. Always inspect products and discard if signs of spoilage appear. Dates on almost all food products are **quality dates**. The food can safely be consumed well past the “Best By” or “Use By” date on the package. Here are some tips to help you safely feed your family:

#### Foods stored in the cupboard

category	storage and usage guidelines
<b>Food in cans or jars</b> (metal cans, glass jars, trays, pouches or paperboard containers)	Use for up to 2 years past the date marked on the package. Refrigerate after opening.
<b>Bakery mixes: cake, muffin, cookie, and pancake</b>	Use for up to 6 months past the date marked on the package.
<b>Dry mixes</b> (hamburger helper) <b>or dry soup</b>	Use for up to 2 years past the date marked on the package.
<b>Dry potatoes, flavored rice or pasta</b>	Use for up to 6 months past the date marked on the package.
<b>Cereals, crackers, chips, rice, and pasta</b>	Use for up to 2 years past the date marked on the package.
<b>Juice</b> (cans, plastic containers, juice boxes)	Use for up to 6 months past the date marked on the package. Refrigerate after opening.
<b>Ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, salad dressing</b>	Use for up to 2 years past the date marked on the package. Refrigerate after opening.

## Foods stored in the refrigerator or freezer

category		storage and usage guidelines
<b>Eggs</b>		As long as eggs are kept in the refrigerator, they can safely be cooked and eaten for up to 5 weeks after the date stamped on the carton. If you receive eggs that aren't in the original carton, plan to keep them refrigerated and use them within 2 weeks.
<b>Meat</b> (hamburger, chicken)		Once you receive meat, cook or freeze within 3-5 days. Meat can be frozen for up to 1 year without harming quality.
<b>Meat salads or sandwiches</b>		If you receive refrigerated deli meat, meat salads like tuna salad, or pre-made sandwiches, eat these within 3-5 days. Keep refrigerated.
<b>Lunch Meat</b>	<b>Deli sliced</b>	Use within 2 days or freeze. Keep refrigerated.
	<b>Packaged</b> (bacon and hot dogs)	Eat up to 2 weeks past date. Once opened, use or freeze within 2 days. Cook bacon or hot dogs before eating.
<b>Milk</b>		Milk should be kept refrigerated. It may be good for up to 5 days past the date on the package. Throw away if the milk develops a sour or "fruity" taste. This may mean the milk has spoiled or "gone bad".
<b>Yogurt, sour cream, buttermilk</b>		Keep refrigerated and use within 3 weeks of the date stamped on the package.
<b>Cheese</b>	<b>Soft</b> (cottage or cheese spread)	Use within 10 days after the date on the package. Keep refrigerated.
	<b>Medium</b> (muenster, brick, or mozzarella)	Use these within 2 months of the date on the package. Discard if mold develops. Keep refrigerated.
	<b>Hard cheese</b> (Cheddar, Swiss, or Parmesan)	Use within 4 months of the date on the package. Discard if mold develops. Keep refrigerated.



# Recalled Foods



The screenshot shows the homepage of [www.Recalls.gov](http://www.Recalls.gov). At the top, the logo reads "www.Recalls.gov" in a red and blue oval, followed by the tagline "Your Online Resource for Recalls". Below this is a navigation bar with seven tabs: "Consumer Products", "Motor Vehicles", "Boats", "Food", "Medicine", "Cosmetics", and "Environmental Products". The "Food" tab is highlighted. On the left side, there are four red oval buttons: "Recent Recalls", "Search for Recalls", "Sign Up for E-Mail", and "Información en Español". To the right of these buttons, there is explanatory text: "To provide better service in alerting the American people to unsafe, hazardous or defective products, six federal agencies with vastly different jurisdictions have joined together to create www.recalls.gov -- a 'one stop shop' for U.S. Government recalls. Follow the tabs above to obtain the latest recall information, to report a dangerous product, or to learn important safety tips." At the bottom of the page, there are logos for "USA.gov Government Made Easy", "NHTSA NATIONAL HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SAFETY ADMINISTRATION", the "U.S. COAST GUARD" seal, "FDA", "USDA", and the "U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY" seal. Below these logos is a horizontal list of links: "Consumer Products | Motor Vehicles | Boats | Food | Medicine | Cosmetics | Environmental Products". At the very bottom, there is a "Privacy and Security Notice. Vulnerability Disclosure Policy." and a note that the site is provided as a resource for federal recalls, with contact information for questions directed to [webteam@cpsc.gov](mailto:webteam@cpsc.gov).

# Refrigerated Storage

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## REFRIGERATION:

- Commercial refrigeration is preferred over home-style
- Home-style freezers are acceptable
- Have adequate refrigeration space
- Only accept as much refrigerated food as you can keep refrigerated
- Have thermometers in refrigerators and check them. Logs can be kept as well.





# Refrigerator Storage Chart

- Always store ready-to-eat foods on the top shelf to prevent possible cross-contamination of bacteria from raw foods.
- Arrange other shelves by cooking temperatures (highest cooking temperature on the bottom).

## Lowest Cooking Temperature

Ready-to-Eat foods and washed produce (top shelf)

Any food that will be hot held that is not in other categories. 135°F (57°C)

Whole seafood; beef, pork, veal, lamb (*steaks and chops*); roasts; shell eggs. 145°F (63°C)

Ground, injected, marinated, or tenderized meats. 155°F (68°C)

All poultry (*chicken, turkey, duck, fowl*); stuffing made with foods that require temperature control. 165°F (74°C)

## Highest Cooking Temperature

**Thermometers:** Keep at least one accurate thermometer in the warmest part of the refrigerator.

**Holding Temperature:** Keep refrigerated foods at a temperature of 41°F (5°C) or below.

**Overloading:** Do not stock a refrigerator with more food than it is designed to hold. It is important to maintain air circulation around food.

**Food Protection:** Unless cooling, keep all food covered to protect it from contamination.



Recommend keeping raw meat and poultry separate in freezers as well

Many other fact sheets available at:  
[https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs\\_Services/FoodCodeFactSheets.aspx](https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/FoodCodeFactSheets.aspx)

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# Dry Storage

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- Cool and dry
- Unless in bottles or cans, off of the floor
- No unprotected overhead drain lines
- Rotate stock
- Pest control





# Chemicals and Personal Care Items

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- Separate chemicals and personal care items from food items
- Designate separate areas for chemical and personal care (shampoo, soap, etc.) items



# Personal Hygiene

- Staff to wash hands upon arrival, after coughing/sneezing into hands, after using restroom
- Provide soap, paper towels and handwash signage





# Healthy Policy

## SAFE FOOD FOR THOSE YOU SERVE

### Healthy policy

**You** are an important part of providing food pantry guests with the food that they need for themselves and their household. You can do your best to help those in need when you follow a few food safety guidelines:

#### Handwashing

Good hand hygiene is key to food safety!

Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly with soap and warm water after:

- Using the restroom and before handling food
- Touching animals
- Sneezing, blowing your nose and coughing
- Touching a cut or open sore
- Being outside and before starting to work with food
- Handling ready-to-eat foods like fresh fruits and vegetables
- Handling trash
- Sorting food, especially packaged items, and before handling fresh food
- Carrying boxes to and from storage or vehicles
- Handling non-food items and before handling food (even if that food is packaged)

#### Illness

You help protect those you serve when you take care of yourself! Do not come to the pantry, even to volunteer, if you are experiencing any of the following symptoms:

- Abdominal cramps, diarrhea, fever, vomiting
- Open, oozing sores on your hands, lower arms or any exposed body parts
- Sore throat with fever

If you have had, or are experiencing, vomiting, diarrhea or jaundice, you may not come in to work until you have been symptom-free for 24 hours or you have a written release from a medical practitioner.

You may not work with food if you have been diagnosed with Hepatitis A, *Salmonella* Typhi, *E. coli*, Norovirus, or Shigella. You must have a note from a medical practitioner to return to work.

I agree to follow the Health Policy:

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Food Pantry representative

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Cooking for Groups

A Volunteer's Guide to Food Safety

