

# Food Storage Basics



## The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's food code says food may not be stored:

- ✓ on the floor.
- ✓ in locker rooms.
- ✓ in toilet rooms.
- ✓ in dressing rooms.
- ✓ in garbage rooms.
- ✓ in mechanical rooms.
- ✓ under open stairwells.
- ✓ under uncovered sewer lines.
- ✓ under water lines that are leaking or have condensed water on them, including automatic fire sprinklers.

## Here are six rules for safe food storage:

1. Store food only in dry storage, refrigerators or freezers. Keep food off the floor and away from chemicals or garbage cans.
2. Keep all storage areas clean and dry. Wipe up spills as soon as they occur.
3. Follow the "First-in, First-out" (FIFO) rule. For example, place the chicken that was delivered today in the freezer behind the chicken delivered yesterday.
4. Label and date new food items removed from their original containers. Also label and date all leftovers.
5. Keep all containers of food tightly covered.
6. Store foods that spoil easily, such as milk, meat and eggs, in the refrigerator or freezer. Always keep these foods out of the dangerous temperature zone (45° F to 140° F).

## True or False

Take this quiz to see if you know how to best receive, store and thaw out food.

	TRUE	FALSE
1) Remove food from its original wrapper and store it in a different wrapper whenever possible.		
2) When food is not in its original container or wrapping, place it in a clean container or wrapping and label it appropriately.		
3) Keep cooked and raw foods separate.		
4) Any kind of raw foods may be stored together.		
5) Bacteria grow rapidly at temperatures above 40° F.		
6) Food that is only two weeks past its expiration date can be kept and used.		
7) Storage areas don't have to be sanitized if the food preparation areas are sanitized.		
8) Food should be stored at least 6 inches off the ground, except for cases on pallets or racks, or pressurized bottles, cans and milk containers in plastic crates.		
9) The best storage temperature for nonperishable goods is between 50° F and 70° F.		
10) Refrigerate or freeze chicken and turkey within four hours of its arrival in its original package.		
11) Refrigerate milk and cheese quickly and keep them refrigerated.		
12) Small batches of food being cooled will grow more bacteria than large batches.		
13) Keep the refrigerator at or below 40° F and the freezer at -10° F or less.		
14) Keep hot foods at 140° F or higher.		
15) Bacteria grow most rapidly at lukewarm temperatures.		
16) Never put cooked meat or poultry on the same plate that held raw food.		
17) It's better to thaw foods at room temperature than in the refrigerator.		
18) If you must thaw food quickly, seal it in a plastic bag and immerse it in cold water for about an hour.		
19) Avoid using the microwave to defrost food if it must be cooked immediately.		
20) For fish, stop the defrost cycle when the fish is soft enough to bend but is still icy		

### Answers:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1) False. Less handling reduces the possibility of contamination. | 8) True.  | 14) True.   |
| 2) True.  | 9) True.  | 15) True.   |
| 3) True.  | 10) False. Refrigerate or freeze within two hours of its arrival.           | 16) True.   |
| 4) False.   | 11) True.   | 17) False.  |
| 5) True.  | 12) False. Small batches grow less bacteria because they cool more quickly. | 18) True.   |
| 6) False.   | 13) True.   | 19) False. You may thaw foods in the microwave on the defrost setting if necessary. |
| 7) False. Storage areas need to be clean, dry and sanitized.      |   | 20) True.   |