

Food Storage and Label Directions

Labeling and Storing Groceries:

- Correctly label fridge and freezer items with the client's initials & expiration date.
- **Perishable and frozen items get put away first.**
- If you purchase meat, you must separate the meat into individual servings before it gets frozen.
- Wrap each serving by using plastic wrap or foil.
 - Bacon- 2 slices per serving
 - Sausage - 2 links/patties per serving
 - Pork chops - 1 chop per serving
 - Ground meats- ¼ lb per serving.
 - Flatten each serving inside plastic wrap or a smaller bag for faster thawing and more efficient storage.
 - Poultry thighs/breasts 1 piece per serving.
 - Poultry legs/wings 2 pieces per serving.
- Put into a FREEZER SAFE bag/container before being placed in the freezer.

Labels for frozen foods look like this:



It is unacceptable to place an entire package of meat into the freezer before separating it into single servings.

- Write client initials on all canned and shelf-stable items.
- Write expiration dates on top of canned items with a permanent marker.
- Place most recently purchased items in the back of pantries and cupboards. Do not place new items into the cupboard/pantry on top of older items.

Use Google as a resource to find out how long a food item is good for once frozen. If it gives you a time frame of 2-3 months, or 5-7 days you will always use the lower amount of time. For these examples it would be 2 months, or 5 days.

**** Only the outermost packaging needs to be labeled with the client's initials, food item, and expiration date. Do not label each item individually if there are multiple single servings in a container or bag. ****

- Berries:
 - Treat berries like leftovers. Eat or freeze within THREE days of bringing them into the house. Always check for mold/rot before eating or freezing.
 - To freeze berries: lay them on a cookie sheet in a single layer, then place cookie sheet into freezer. When berries are frozen place them into labeled freezer safe bags and put in freezer.

- Chili, soups, juices, or anything liquid:
 - Place the cooled liquid into a labeled freezer safe bag. Lay it flat on a cookie sheet or cutting board in the freezer. This makes it easier to store in the freezer.

**** Always cool down liquids by placing them in a shallow container. DO NOT leave out on counter to cool down for more than 30 minutes. ****

Items sold from a freezer (french fries, chicken nuggets, pizza rolls) must be in resealable packaging OR placed inside a freezer safe bag before being placed back into the freezer. **DO NOT** use rubber bands, twist ties, or tape to reseal bags.

Check Google to see what items can be frozen. Milk, yogurt, scrambled eggs, cheese, casseroles, baked goods, and produce can ALL be frozen to extend the life of food.

Bread lasts longer and stays fresher in the freezer. It should not be refrigerated.

Expiration Dates:

Once an item is opened it has a new expiration from the one printed on the container. Example:

- Ocean spray cranberry juice with an expiration date of 10-24-27 printed on the container gets opened on 2-2-26. The new expiration date is now 2-16-26, because the manufacturer label says “Use within 14 days of opening”.
- Jimmy Bean Honey Ham lunch meat that has an expiration date of 05-16-26 on the container gets opened on 2-2-26. The new expiration date is 2-9-26, because the manufacturer label says “Use within 7 days of opening”.

** Remember to freeze things before or on their expiration dates. Google how long it is good for once frozen, then label accordingly. **

Labeling Leftovers:

All leftovers are good for 3 days only. The label on leftovers should look like this:

SP <small>(Client Initials)</small>	Spaghetti w/ meat sauce
Expires 5-06-26	<small>(3 days from today's date)</small>

Leftovers need to be stored in an airtight container OR wrapped with plastic wrap before being labeled.

ALL foods, in ALL supported living homes MUST have initials and an expiration date. There are no exceptions to this in any house.

Storing items in original containers:

- Open containers that are kept in cupboards or pantries (cereal, chips, flour, sugar, rice, chocolate chips, etc.) must be placed inside a Ziploc style bag to maintain freshness and keep out mold and insects.
- Foods that come from the store in resealable packing must be closed tightly after use.
- Do not use rubber bands or tape to hold containers shut.

Counter stable produce:

The following items should be stored on the counter in a bowl or container with good ventilation (colanders work great):

- Tomatoes
- Peppers
- Bananas
- Oranges
- Cucumbers
- Avocados
- Potatoes & Yams
- Onions (except green onions) & Garlic
- Fresh Basil
- Stone Fruits (peaches, plums, nectarines)
- Melons

You can label some of these directly with initials (melons, bananas, oranges, avocados).

You can use a label with client initials and expiration date placed inside the produce holder for other items (peaches, peppers, tomatoes).

**** Do not add additional requirements on food labels.**

**** A food item should only have initials, expiration date, and what the food item is if it is not immediately identifiable. Once the item is opened, the new expiration date should be added.**