

Dry Goods

Dry goods are shelf-stable foods that can be safely stored at room temperature and are typically packaged in a can, sealed plastic bag, cardboard box, or aseptic container. These items should be stored in a cool and dry area, off of the floor, and away from extreme sources of heat or cold. Depending on the product or manufacturer, dry goods may have a shelf life for a year or more. Check the package for the ‘best if used by’ date and use this handout to learn how to safely handle dry goods. Discard cans that are severely dented, bulging, leaking or rusted, as well as packages that were opened before you received them. These are signs that the food may be unsafe to eat.

Canned Fruit, Vegetables, Soup, Beans, Meat, Poultry, and Fish



Canned foods typically have ‘best if used by’ dates of 2-5 years for quality assurance, but they may be safe indefinitely as long as they are not exposed to freezing temperatures or temperatures above 90 °F. Before opening, clean the top of the can to remove any dust, dirt, or debris. After opening, store remaining remaining food in the refrigerator in an air-tight container or resealable bag. Do not store remaining food in the can.

Dried Fruit, Dry Beans, Nuts, Nonfat Dry Milk, Dried Eggs, and Grains



Open the package and use the desired amount. If the food is in a resealable bag, tightly seal the bag before storing it. If the food is not in a resealable bag, store the remaining food in an air-tight container or resealable bag. These items can be stored at room temperature or in the refrigerator.

Tip

Break down large packages into smaller portions by using clean resealable bags and air-tight containers. For example, a 2 pound bag of dry beans can be divided into four 8 ounce bags. This will help to retain the quality of the remaining product.

Fresh Vegetables

Store onions, winter squash, and all types of potatoes in dry storage to maintain quality. Do not refrigerate these items. Wash all fresh produce thoroughly under running water before preparing and/or eating. Cut off any damaged or bruised areas before preparing and/or eating. Discard produce that is spoiled or rotten.

Shelf-stable Milk and Juice

Store at room temperature until opened. After opening, store in the refrigerator.

