

Microbe Family Get Away!

Storing food smartly & safely



*Mike the Microbe teaches us
how to store food safely*

Safe Food for Children

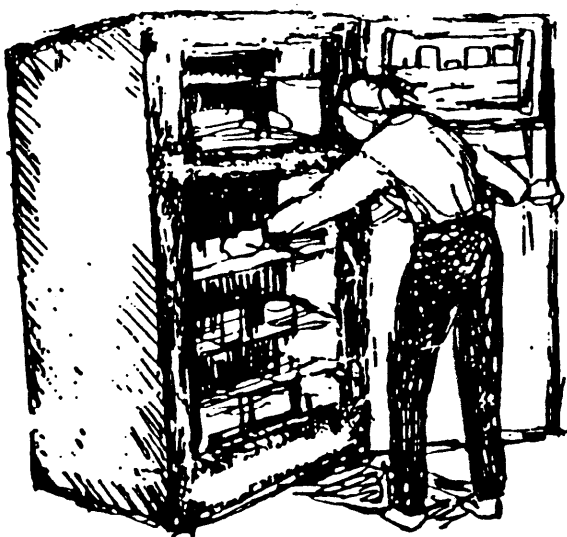
A series of lessons for
parents & child care providers

Lesson 4

Lesson 4

What you should know about storing food

What do we do with food we've brought home from the grocery store or that is leftover from a meal or snack? In this brochure, you'll find tips on how to properly store food to save you time and money, as well as keep it safe.



Remember these tips for smart and easy cold storage

Growth of microbes is slowed, not stopped, in cold storage. In time, the quality of food goes down. Check a food storage chart to see how long each item should be kept.

Refrigerator Storage

To keep microbes in check, **the refrigerator temperature should be between 32° and 40°F**. Generally, keep the refrigerator as cold as possible without freezing milk or lettuce.

- To reduce moisture loss and keep microbes out of refrigerated foods, cover them with foil, plastic wrap, plastic bags or store in airtight containers.

- Place packages of raw meat, poultry or fish on a plate before refrigerating so juices won't drip on other food. Raw juices often contain microbes which could get on other foods.

- Refrigerate food immediately after the meal is over, even if it is still hot.

- Only store food in plastic bags, wraps and containers meant to be used for food.

- Never allow the printed side of plastic bags, such as bread wrappers, to touch food.

- Check your stock for outdated food every few days.

Freezer Storage

Freezing is the best way to keep the fresh-like qualities of many foods. **Your freezer should not run higher than 0°F**.

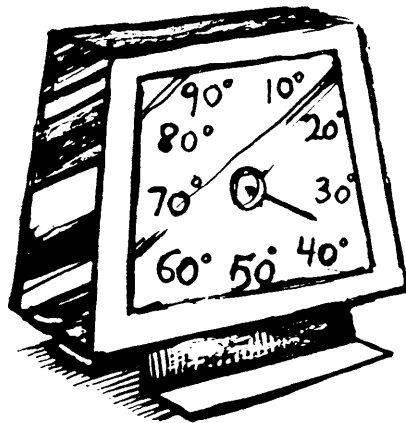
- A freezer keeps food best when it is nearly full.

- Food freezes faster in small portions.

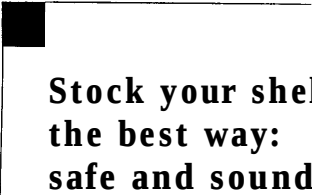
- To decrease moisture loss and "freezer burn," wrap food in heavy-duty foil, freezer storage bags, freezer paper or store in plastic containers with tight lids.

- Freeze meat, poultry or fish immediately if it will not be used within a few days.

Note: The clear wrap on meats bought in stores lets air in. If you plan to freeze the meat for more than 2 weeks, rewrap it in freezer paper or storage bags.



Use an appliance thermometer to check refrigerator and freezer temperatures.



Stock your shelves the best way: safe and sound

Store canned and packaged goods on dry, clean, cool shelves.

- Arrange the cupboard so that the oldest products are used first.
- Store foods away from appliances which produce heat.
- Store food in tightly closed containers to keep insects out and protect the flavor.
- For best quality, use foods within times recommended on a food storage chart.

You may be able to tell if a canned food is dangerous to eat by how it looks.

- Throw away bulging cans.
- Check dented or rusty cans. Throw away cans that are leaking.
- Don't buy or store damaged cans.

Taking care of leftovers: package & date properly

Leftovers should be refrigerated or frozen promptly after meals.

- Divide large amounts into small, shallow containers for quick cooling.
- Date packages and use within the times recommended on food storage chart.
- It's best to store food in tightly covered containers. Do not store food in dishes or pottery which you suspect may have lead paint on it. Imported dishes or those made by a local potter may be glazed with a type of lead paint.

WARNING:

Never taste food that looks or smells strange, or has been stored too long — just throw it out. When in doubt, throw it out.

Microbe Family Get Away! is the fourth in a five-part program on *Safe Food for Children: A series of lessons for parents and child care providers.*

Mary P. Clarke, PhD, RD, LD, CHE
Extension Specialist, Nutrition Education
Kansas State University

Paula Peters, PhD
Extension Specialist, Nutrition
Kansas State University

Writer: Phyllis Grover
Child Care Association, Inc.
Wichita/Sedgwick County, Kansas

The material is based upon work supported by the Extension Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture, under special project number 91-EFSQ-1-4030.

**Funded in cooperation with the Kansas
Association for Family and Community Education.**

**Kansas State University
Agricultural Experiment Station and
Cooperative Extension Service**

L-895 November 1994

It is the policy of Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service that all persons shall have equal opportunity and access to its educational programs, services, activities, and materials without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age or disability. Kansas State University is an equal opportunity organization. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Marc A. Johnson, Director.

File code: Food and Nutrition – 2-2 NP