

# On your mark, get set, go grocery shopping!



*Grocery shopping for safe food  
with Mike the Microbe*

## Safe Food for Children

A series of lessons for  
parents & child care providers

Lesson 2

## What to look for at the grocery store

To keep your food safe, always select and handle food items carefully in the grocery store. Here are some things to watch out for when shopping.

1. Look for cans without dents, cracks or bulging lids.
2. Avoid opened, torn or damaged packages.
3. Check "Use-by-date."
4. Buy only the freshest fruits and vegetables.
5. Select fresh red meat, poultry and fish.
6. Select cold refrigerated foods and frozen foods.
7. Buy prepared foods from delis and salad bars only if cold foods are cold and hot foods are hot.
8. Open egg cartons to check for cracked eggs.
9. Pick up frozen foods last.



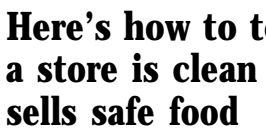
## **How to bring groceries home**

1. Do not let raw chicken, fish and meat drip on other foods. Wrap in separate plastic bags.

2. Put frozen foods together in plastic bags to keep cold.

3. Ready-to-eat fresh foods should not touch meat, poultry, fish or anything that would contaminate them.

4. During hot weather and if it will take you an hour or more to get home, bring along a chilled cooler in which to pack cold and frozen foods so they do not spoil on the way home.



## **Here's how to tell if a store is clean and sells safe food**

When choosing where to buy food, here is a checklist of what to look for.

\_\_\_ Look for signs of cleanliness. Check the floors, food cases, produce counter, meat cutting areas, etc.

\_\_\_ Check the store thermometers. They should be between 35°- 40°F in refrigerators and at 0°F or lower in frozen food cases.

\_\_\_ The room temperature of the store should be cool in hot weather.

\_\_\_ The store should provide employees and customers the appropriate scoops, spoons, serving tongs or tissues to handle bulk foods, baked goods, deli items and salad bar selections.

\_\_\_ The newest stock is placed behind older items.

\_\_\_ Cleaning supplies, car products and other non-food items are located away from food and in separate sections of the store.

\_\_\_ Ready-to-eat-meats are separated from raw meat, poultry and fish.

## What do product dates mean on packages?

Many products have dates on them even though, at this time, they are optional. The date stamped on the product packages may indicate the product freshness and can serve as a guide to safe storage.

- A *Sell by* date tells grocers and consumers how long the product should be kept for sale on the shelf. The product may still be safe to eat after the sell by date passes.



- A *Use by* date indicates how long the product will retain top eating quality after it is purchased. Throw it away if the use by date is past to insure maximum safety.

## How to be a good shopper

Be a safe and considerate food shopper. Follow these suggestions to help the store keep food safe.

1. Don't open packages or cartons, except egg cartons to check for cracked eggs.

2. Return unwanted items to their proper place.

3. Report any spoiled or leaking container to the management.

4. Use equipment or papers to pick up bulk foods.

A little care on your part lowers food costs and keeps food safe for everyone.

*On your mark, get set, go grocery shopping!* is the second in a five-part program on *Safe Food for Children: A series of lessons for parents and child care providers.*

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This 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-893 November 1994

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File code: Food and Nutrition – 2-2 NP