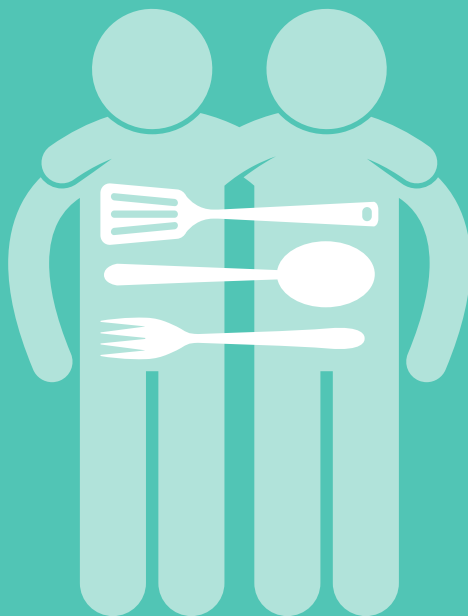


Quick Tips



Safe storage of food

Storing food safely is good.

- It is easier to see what we have when the food is in the right place with clear labels.
- It keeps us well – we don't want to eat food that could make us ill.

Many people find this needs more effort as we get older.

- There is more food to store when it is only one person, or you are eating smaller amounts.

- It is harder to store food when people's eyesight is poorer or they find it harder to remember where they put things.
- Sometimes there are several other people in the kitchen too, such as family or care workers, so more chance of people not realising when food was opened or where it was stored.

These are our tips to make life easier.

Store foods in the right place

Keep an eye on the fridge:

- Raw foods, like vegetables, and foods that are ready to eat, like ready meals, should be kept in the fridge in separate containers.
- You should always keep raw meat on the bottom shelf of your fridge or in its own section, away from ready to eat food.
- You should keep eggs and dairy products, like butter and yoghurt, in the fridge.
- Don't keep open cans in the fridge. You can take out whatever was in the can and put it in a container or a bowl covered in cling film.

Look after cupboards:

- Get into the habit of checking labels on food packets to see which ones should be stored in the fridge; some are ok in the cupboard until they have been opened.
- Make sure you tightly seal up packs of dried foods, like rice and cereal, after you have opened them.

If you have transferred food into a container it can help to put a label, part of the packaging or even a picture on the outside of the container so you know what is in it without needing to open it. Adding the date is also useful so you know how long it has been there for.

Store foods for the right length of time

Unfortunately all food will go bad at some point, no matter how well you store it. Keep an eye on the 'Use By' or 'Best Before' dates on your food.

Use up leftovers from the fridge within two days.

“I put a sticky label with the day I open things like a packet of cold meat. Then I know when my 2 days are up.”

'Use by' dates are usually on foods that can go off quickly. It can be hard to throw away food if you feel like you're wasting it but eating foods past their use by date can make you ill.

'Best before' dates are usually printed on foods that are ok to eat for longer. They show how long the food will be at its best. But if a food

For further information about Food Buddies, more tips and other useful sources of information, visit our website: www.otbds.org/projects/food-buddies

looks or smells off, don't eat it even if it is within its best before date.

Easy to see and open

Try clips for packets and plastic storage bags that are easier to use than the wee seals that come with the packets. There are bright coloured ones in many shops.

You can get clear plastic storage containers that have plastic flaps that fold down on each side. These are easy to open and close if you find it hard to grip things or don't like fiddly things.

Get containers that are in bright colours, or have coloured flaps, if it makes it easier for you to see them.

Temperature control

Having the right temperature in your fridge, freezer and larder (if you have one) is important for keeping different foods safe for you to eat. Bacteria will grow fastest when the temperature is between 5 and 63 degrees Celsius – and it's the bacteria that makes people unwell.

These tips will keep your food at a safe temperature:

- After buying chilled and frozen food get them in the fridge or freezer as quickly as you can.
- You can keep food at a safe temperature for several hours by using ice packs. They are handy for picnics and lunch boxes too.
- Use a thermometer so you can keep an eye on the temperature in your fridge and freezer; keep your fridge at 4 to 8 degrees Celsius and your freezer at -18C or below.
- Ready to eat foods can go off quickly if they are kept at room temperature.
- Be careful with your leftovers. Make sure they are cooled down and then put them in the fridge within 1-2 hours.
- If you have had any perishable foods out at room temperature for more than 4 hours it is safest to throw them away.

Cooking

- Making sure that food is properly cooked through is the best way to kill most of the bacteria that leads to food poisoning. Be especially careful when you cook meat. Make sure

it is piping hot, there are no pink bits and any juices are running clear.

- When you reheat food make sure it is piping hot all over.
- There is more information about healthy eating and food safety advice from Food Standards Scotland and other sources on our website.

Food from other people

It is lovely when someone leaves food for you to eat later. But friends and relatives don't usually label food in the same way as food we buy from shops. It can be hard to remember when you got something or what you are supposed to do with it.

Here are some suggestions:

- Ask the person to write the day and date you have to use it by on a label, along with how to heat it.
- Get them to put their name on a label. Then if you are not sure what to do, you can phone them and ask.
- Keep a set of sticky labels and a pen beside the door or beside the fridge and ask them to use that.

Food Buddies Quick Tips

Food Buddies develops practical help for older people, people living with dementia and other people who sometimes have problems around food. We are trying to make life easier for people, staying safe and continuing to shop, cook and enjoy food.

This guide has been brought together with older people and their friends and families who are sharing their experience to help other people. We hope it is also useful for volunteers and staff who support people.

We would like to thank everyone who has helped us develop our Quick Tips.

Food Buddies is a project based at Outside the Box.

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