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Safe Food Storage and Best Nutritional Value

Many foods that are stored in the pantry have expiration dates. Labels include expiration dates so that people can consume the best quality and nutritional value from food. Stored foods can lose nutritional value and should be eaten or rotated out of stock.

A great way to be sure food with the oldest date is used first is to effectively store food. The First In, First Out (FIFO) method can be used by storing older foods toward the front of the shelf, and placing newer foods toward the back of shelf in your pantry. FIFO allows food establishments to keep their foods rotated and fresh and works for individuals as well. Other simple tricks like marking the expiration date in large numbers on the package makes keeping track of foods and expiration dates easier than trying to read dates with small printing.

Frozen food should also be rotated on a regular basis. When placing items in the freezer, keep an inventory list on the door noting when the item was purchased and the expiration date. This will allow you to keep track of items on hand and allow planning to use them before the expiration dates. Kansas State Research and Extension [Safe Food Storage: The Refrigerator](#) and [Safe Food Storage: The Cupboard](#) can help with determining the length of time to store foods in the freezer and pantry.

If you have preserved foods from your garden, there will not be an expiration date on the food. [The National Center for Home Food Preservation](#) has a wealth of food preservation and storage information. Additional publications Preserve it Fresh, Preserve it Safe cover other food preservation topics such as water bath canning, pressure canning and specific methods for preserving various fruits and vegetables and are also available through the [KSRE Bookstore](#) website.

Doing these simple things will help eliminate food waste and use foods at their peak nutritional value. For more information about this or any other topic related to nutrition, food safety, or health, contact Holly Miner at haminer@ksu.edu or call 620-331-2690.

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