

Safe Receiving & Storage: Meat



Receiving Fresh & Frozen Meats

Inspect the meat immediately when it arrives to look for these signs of quality

- Frozen Meat
 - Frozen solid to the touch
 - No sign of thawing and re-freezing: wet box, large ice crystals on meat, frozen liquid at the bottom of the package
 - Temperature: below 0° F
- Fresh meat
 - Meat should not be sticky or slimy
 - Temperature: below 40° F
- Check packaging- reject if the packaging exposes the meat
- Check color
 - Chicken and turkey should be cream colored or slightly yellow
 - Beef should be bright red
 - Pork should be white or light pink
 - Lamb should be light red
 - Reject discolored meat: green, brown, purple or black
- Check for odors- reject anything that has a sour smell or other strong odor

Storing Meats

- If an item has been defrosted, it should be stored in the refrigerator and cooked as soon as possible. Never refreeze meats.
- Meats that will not be cooked in 1-5 days should be stored in the freezer at a temperature below 0° F. Use the chart below and cook or freeze the meat within the refrigerator storage time listed.

Food Type	Refrigerator Storage Time	Freezer Storage Time
Poultry- chicken or turkey	1 to 2 days	9-12 months
Beef, veal, pork, lamb	3 to 5 days	4-12 months
Ground meat & ground poultry	1 to 2 days	3-4 months
Ham, uncooked	1 week	1-2 months
Sausage, uncooked	1 to 2 days	1-2 months
Lunch meats & Hot dogs (unopened)	2 weeks	1-2 months
Smoked Meats- bacon, sausage, ham	1 week	1-2 months