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Proper Food Storage

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Introduction

Objective

To understand the basic practices of proper food storage and emphasize refrigeration storage techniques to prevent food contamination.

Key Messages:

- To understand the basic practices of proper food storage
- To illustrate refrigeration storage techniques
- To discuss the importance of proper food storage



Proper Food Storage

The Foodservice Employee's Role

Proper Cold Storage Tips

Storing food properly is important in the prevention of bacteria growth. Refrigeration and freezing slows bacterial growth, so that bacteria does not reach the level that can cause illness if ingested.

REFRIGERATION AND FREEZER STORAGE

- Temperature of refrigerator should be 40°F or below throughout the unit
- Temperature of freezer should be 0°F or below throughout the unit
- Raw meat, poultry and seafood should be in a sealed container or wrapper to prevent juices from contaminating other foods
- Refrigerate perishable food within 2 hours if held at proper temperatures
- Fresh poultry, fish and ground meats should be cooked or frozen within 2 days
- Fresh beef, veal, lamb or pork should be cooked or frozen within 3-5 days
- Keep foods covered to prevent odors from spreading

<https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm093704.htm>

Proper Dry Storage Tips

DRY STORAGE

- Maintain a cool, clean, dry environment
- Store food at least 6” inches off the floor
- Allow for a 2 foot ceiling and 18” outside wall clearance for temperature regulation
- Store all cleaning and chemical products on shelves below dry food for prevention of contamination
- High-acidity canned items (tomatoes, pineapple, etc.) can be stored unopened on the shelf for 12-18 months
- Low-acidity canned items (meat, fish, vegetables, etc.) can be stored unopened for 2-5 years
- Discard cans that are dented, leaking, bulging or rusted

<https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm093704.htm>

Refrigeration Storage

All refrigerators vary in size and layout – the chart below is a suggested layout to keep food safe.

It is recommended to arrange your refrigerator in order of cooking temperature, to prevent liquids from higher-temperature cooking foods from contaminating foods that won't reach that temperature.

Top Shelf		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ready-to-eat foods/leftovers • Fresh fruit, fresh vegetables that will not be cooked before being served
2nd Shelf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowest cooking temperature • Items with a cooking temperature of 135°F • Any food that will be held hot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foods that will be cooked and held hot that are not included in other categories. • Vegetables that will be cooked and held for service
3rd Shelf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items with a cooking temperature of 145°F 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole seafood – fish and shellfish • Whole cuts of beef, pork, lamb, roasts • Eggs that will be served immediately
4th Shelf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Items with a cooking temperature of 160°F 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ground meats • Marinated meats • Eggs that will be held hot
5th Bottom Shelf	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highest cooking temperature • Items with a cooking temperature of 165°F 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All poultry

If your refrigerator has a meat drawer, store only raw meats in the meat drawer as this is set to be one of the coldest locations to help prevent spoilage.

If your refrigerator has a crisper drawer(s), store only produce, separated by high humidity (vegetables) and low humidity (fruits).

<https://www.statefoodsafety.com/Resources/article/category/Resources/article/fridge-storage-for-food-safety>

Why Is It Important to Store Food Properly?

- 1 Storing food properly is an important step in the prevention of bacterial growth.
- 2 Refrigeration and freezing slows bacterial growth, so that bacteria does not reach the level that can cause illness if ingested.
- 3 If food is not stored properly, the chances of cross-contamination are greater.

https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/refrigeration-and-food-safety/ct_index/tut/p/a1/jZFRT8lwEMc_DY_d3RwS8G1ZYmDKkBCI7IWUreubabO3SVqd-est8EQNK76l3v3979z_lgUKu2JsUzEmitWHO855M9rnESzhJMV7PwHhfZy3r1kCQ43dx6YPchHkEVX6i-cGP_Tp1d8cGOWyVJA3jFXE6kqDVRwR5iyPTcWaKV1SSyruPsgFSscsTXnzheOOTJUa6bKRioB1PDKSMHN4JB_oyQ_5EALt5eq5O-whfy0NQx9LLJoM56nWYSr8W_gjHfwGVz_PSi0YdhUbtYHaKpH9N3yA03wavx6dq5zt6NclR93wdCa9HwoNDtCM9Jam0d0FMSuvaZfj7Gc5RP7XZq4y8BE-W7/#2

Key Takeaways

- Proper food storage is an important part of the process to keep food safe
- Dry food storage is just as important as cold food storage, and there are several techniques to keep both types of food safe
- All refrigerators vary in size and layout; however, an easy way to configure your refrigerator is to arrange the shelves in order of cooking temperature (lowest at the top) and use meat drawers and crispers when applicable



References

- https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/safe-food-handling/refrigeration-and-food-safety/ct_index!/ut/p/a1/jZFRT8lwEMc_DY_d3RwS8G1ZYmDKkBCI7IWUreuabO3SVqd-est8EQNK76l3v3979z_IgUKu2JsUzEmtWHO855M9rnESzhJMV7PwHhfZy3r1kCQ43dx6YPcHkEVX6icGP_Tp1d8cGOWyVJA3jFXE6kqDVRwR5iyPTcWaKV1SSyruPsgFSscsTXnzheOOTJUa6bKRioB1PDKSMHN4JB_oyQ_5EALt5eq5O-whfy0NQx9LLJoM56nWYSr8W_gjHffwGVz_PSi0YdhUbtYHaKpH9N3yA03wavx6dq5zt6NclR93wdCa9HwoNDtCM9Jam0d0FMSuvaZfj7Gc5RP7XZq4y8BE-W7/#2
- <https://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates/ucm093704.htm>
- <https://www.statefoodsafety.com/Resources/article/category/Resources/article/fridge-storage-for-food-safety>

Proper Food Storage Post-Test Answers

1. **What are appropriate refrigerator and freezer temperatures?**
 - a. 42°F for Refrigerator, 32°F for Freezer
 - b. 40°F for Refrigerator, -40°F for Freezer
 - c. 35°F for Refrigerator, -20°F for Freezer
 - d. **40°F, for Refrigerator, 0°F for Freezer**
2. **Why is proper food storage so important?**
 - a. Storing food properly is important in the prevention of bacteria growth.
 - b. Refrigeration and freezing slows bacterial growth, so that bacteria does not reach the level that can cause illness if ingested.
 - c. If food is not stored properly, the chances of cross-contamination are higher.
 - d. **All of the above**
3. **Which of the statements below is TRUE?**
 - a. Chemicals should be stored on the top shelf so that they are out of reach.
 - b. You can still use cans that are dented as long as they are not leaking.
 - c. **Store all dry food in a cool, clean, dry environment.**
 - d. Store large boxes of food on the floor if there is no space on the shelves.
4. **From top to bottom shelf, what is the correct order for refrigeration storage?**
 - a. Raw Shrimp, Freshly Cut Melon, Romaine Lettuce, Raw Chicken Thighs
 - b. **Leftovers, Carrots that will be used for soup, Raw Ground Beef, Raw Chicken Breasts**
 - c. Raw Turkey Breast, Raw Ground Beef, Raw Salmon, Fresh Apples
 - d. Leftovers, Raw Chicken Breast, Eggs, Raw Shrimp
5. **Dry Food Storage is not as important as Cold Food Storage, because dry foods are not as likely to get contaminated.**
 - a. True
 - b. **False**

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