

— FREE QUICK-START • KITCHEN

The Fridge *Safety Hierarchy* Card

A shelf-by-shelf fridge map, a temperature check, a 2-hour clock and fridge times for the foods you buy most.

5

FRIDGE ZONES

40°F

CHECK

2 h

CLOCK

8

FRIDGE TIMES

KITCHEN PRACTICE • FREE SAFETY CARD

The Fridge

Safety Hierarchy Card

A shelf-by-shelf fridge map, a temperature check for fridge and freezer, a 2-hour clock that adds up the minutes for you, and the fridge times for the foods you buy most.

5 ZONES shelf by shelf	40°F FRIDGE or colder	2 h CLOCK counted for you	8 FOODS with fridge times
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How to use this card

TODAY

STEP 1 Check the temperature Appliance thermometer on the middle shelf; read it after 24 hours.	STEP 2 Re-shelve Ready-to-eat top, dairy and eggs middle, raw meat sealed at the bottom.	STEP 3 Date the leftovers Tape and a marker; 3 to 4 days is the limit.	STEP 4 Count the minutes The 2-hour clock adds up time out of the fridge.
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Gravity Is the System

3 FACTS

A fridge has two jobs: keep food at 40°F or below, and keep raw juices away from food you will not cook again. The shelf order does the second job by gravity: nothing raw ever sits above ready-to-eat food.

Cold slows bacteria; it does not stop the clock. Storage times are real limits, and the 2-hour rule (1 hour above 90°F) covers everything that leaves the fridge.

A dial is not a thermometer. Many fridges run warmer than their owners think. An appliance thermometer on the middle shelf tells you the truth in a day.

The order is the system. Ready-to-eat on top, eggs and dairy in the middle, raw meat sealed at the bottom, produce in the drawers, condiments in the door.

THE EVIDENCE BEHIND IT

USDA FSIS Keep the fridge at 40°F or below and the freezer at 0°F; check with an appliance thermometer.	USDA DANGER ZONE Perishables left between 40 and 140°F for more than 2 hours (1 hour above 90°F) should be discarded.
FOODSAFETY.GOV Cooked leftovers keep 3 to 4 days in the fridge; raw poultry and ground meat 1 to 2 days.	

WHEN TO THROW IT OUT WITHOUT TASTING

Perishables out over 2 hours (1 hour above 90°F); anything above 40°F for over 2 hours in a power outage; mold on soft food such as soft cheese, yogurt, bread, leftovers or soft fruit. On hard cheese and firm produce, cut 1 inch around the spot. Food can look and smell fine and still make you sick: when in doubt, throw it out.

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The Shelf Map and Temperature Check

CALCULATES

ZONE	HOLDS	WHY
Door	Condiments, juices, water	The warmest spot. Never milk, eggs or raw meat.
Upper shelves	Ready-to-eat food	Leftovers (dated), drinks, deli items: nothing raw can drip on them.
Middle shelves	Eggs and dairy	Eggs stay in their carton; milk is steadier here than in the door.
Bottom shelf	Raw meat, poultry, seafood	Sealed or on a tray, lowest of all, so juices cannot reach other food.
Crisper drawers	Produce	High humidity for leafy greens and herbs; low humidity for apples, pears and peppers.

TEMPERATURE CHECK (AFTER 24 HOURS)

FRIDGE, MIDDLE SHELF (°F)

FRIDGE VERDICT

FREEZER (°F)

FREEZER VERDICT

FRIDGE TIMES (40°F OR BELOW)

Raw poultry, ground meat	1–2 days
Raw fish and shellfish	1–2 days
Raw steaks, chops, roasts	3–5 days
Cooked leftovers	3–4 days
Deli meat, opened	3–5 days
Milk, opened	7 days
Eggs in the shell	3–5 weeks
Hard cheese, opened	3–4 weeks

Fridge times at 40°F or below (FoodSafety.gov). The clock starts when food is cooked or opened. Freezing at 0°F keeps food safe; the freezer times in the binder are for quality.

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The 2-Hour Clock

CALCULATES

Perishable food gets 2 hours in total between 40 and 140°F, 1 hour when it is above 90°F. The clock does not restart when food goes back in the fridge. Enter the minutes at each stage.

FOOD	
STORE TO FRIDGE (MINUTES)	
ON THE COUNTER (MINUTES)	
SERVING (MINUTES)	
COOLING (MINUTES)	
TOTAL OUT	
NORMAL DAY (2 HOURS)	
ABOVE 90°F (1 HOUR)	

NOT ON THE CLOCK

Bread, whole fruit and vegetables, hard cheese, dry goods, most condiments and unopened shelf-stable foods.

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From One Fridge to the Whole Kitchen

This card handles the fridge. **The Kitchen Food Safety Binder** covers the whole kitchen: every safe cooking temperature, the clocks for leftovers, thawing and power outages, a 34-food storage table, cross-contamination and cleaning, home preserving and higher-risk eaters.

The temperature chart and thermometer check

every safe minimum temperature, plus an ice-water calibration calculator.

The clocks

a 2-hour clock for three foods, thawing time by weight, and a power-outage clock.

The storage table

34 foods with fridge and freezer times, plus where produce keeps best.

Clean, separate, preserve

cross-contamination, a bleach calculator, the cleaning schedule, home canning rules and higher-risk eaters.

THIS FREE CARD

- ✓ The shelf map and fridge temperature check
- ✓ A 2-hour clock for one food
- ✓ Fridge times for eight foods

THE BINDER ADDS

- ✓ Every safe cooking temperature
- ✓ Thawing, power-outage and bleach calculators
- ✓ 34 foods, fridge and freezer
- ✓ Monthly check and freezer inventory

FILLABLE PDF E-BOOK

Fill it in on screen or print it; it calculates as you type. A free online edition comes with it.

FACT-CHECKED

Against USDA FSIS, FDA, FoodSafety.gov and CDC guidance.

ONE-TIME PAYMENT

One payment, no subscription, instant download after checkout.

SEE THE FOOD SAFETY BINDER →

SOURCES • FACT-CHECKED BY THE HEALTH SECRETS EDITORIAL TEAM

USDA FSIS: Danger Zone (40°F–140°F); Leftovers and Food Safety; Refrigeration and Food Safety; Molds on Food.	Temperatures, the 2-hour rule, mold.
FoodSafety.gov and FDA: Cold Food Storage Chart; Are You Storing Food Safely?	Fridge times; shelf order.

NEXT TIME YOU UNPACK

Raw at the bottom. *Dates on everything.*

01 • CHECK

40°F or colder, by thermometer.

02 • SHELVE

Ready-to-eat up top, raw sealed at the bottom.

03 • GO FURTHER

The binder covers the whole kitchen.

Keep reading on healthsecrets.com

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[See the Kitchen Food Safety Binder](#) →

[Read: Fermented foods and gut health](#) →

[Recommended kitchen safety gear](#) →

Educational and organizational tool only, not medical advice. It is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease. An educational and organizational tool, not medical advice. If someone is very ill after eating, get medical care.