**Wasted food = wasted resources**

The average American household wastes about 25% of the food they buy – especially produce. When we throw away food, we also waste significant amounts of water, energy, fuel, fertilizer, time and money used to produce, package and transport it.

**Small changes make a BIG difference!**

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**Food product dating de-mystified:**

- **Use by:** Last date recommended by manufacturer for peak quality.
- **Sell by:** Manufacturer’s date to tell store how long to display item for sale.
- **Best before/best by:** Manufacturer’s recommended date for optimal flavor/quality.
- **Closed or coded dates:** Packing numbers used by manufacturers.
- **Use by:** Last date recommended by manufacturer for peak quality.

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**Sell-by, best-by, use-by: What do food date labels really mean?**

With one exception, it’s not about food safety.

Date labels are confusing and can lead to needlessly throwing away good food. With the exception of infant formula, product dating is set by manufacturers to indicate the latest date for peak quality, not safety. Even if the date expires, a product should be safe, wholesome and of good quality if stored and handled properly.

See the USDA’s Food Product Dating fact sheet at [fsis.usda.gov](http://fsis.usda.gov) for more information.

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**What about composting?**

Composting is great for food that cannot be eaten (banana peels, egg shells) or has spoiled (moldy leftovers, rotten fruits or vegetables). What’s even better is to not waste food in the first place.

As much as possible, buy what you need – eat what you buy.

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**Waste Less, Save More.**

*Partial content for this brochure provided courtesy of Seattle Public Utilities.*

Visit [recyclefood.com](http://recyclefood.com) for more tips and tools about how to prevent food waste at home.

Alternate Formats Available

206-477-4466 • TTY Relay 711

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**Fruit and Vegetable Storage Guide**

**KEEP IT FRESH!**

**FRIDGE**

Freeze fruits and veggies that you won’t eat in time. Brown bananas work great in smoothies or banana bread.

**COUNTER**

Store stone fruit on counter until ripe, then place in fridge.

**PANTRY**

Store onions and garlic in a cool, dark place separate from potatoes.

**FREEZER**

Store apples loose and away from other produce.

Store cabbage loose in crisper drawer.

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**Wasted food = wasted resources**

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**Small changes make a BIG difference!**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fruits/Veggies</th>
<th>How to Store</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Apples</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Separate from other produce.</td>
<td><strong>Brussel Sprouts</strong></td>
<td>Fridge – crisper drawer. Store in a sealed container.</td>
<td><strong>Grapes</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store in a sealed container. Wash just before eating to avoid mold.</td>
<td><strong>Peppers</strong></td>
<td>Fridge – crisper drawer. Store loose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Artichokes</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store in plastic bag or sealed container.</td>
<td><strong>Cabbage</strong></td>
<td>Fridge – crisper drawer. Store loose.</td>
<td><strong>Green onions/ scallions</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Wrap in a damp towel or store upright in a glass of water.</td>
<td><strong>Potatoes</strong></td>
<td>Cupboard/Pantry. Store loose or in a paper bag separate from onions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asparagus</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Remove bands and ties. Store upright in a glass of water with a plastic bag over the top.</td>
<td><strong>Cauliflower</strong></td>
<td>Fridge – crisper drawer. Store in a plastic bag or sealed container.</td>
<td><strong>Herbs, leafy</strong> (cilantro, parsley)</td>
<td>Fridge. Trim stems and store upright in a glass of water with a plastic bag over the top.</td>
<td><strong>Root veggies</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store in a sealed container with a dry towel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Avocados</strong></td>
<td>Ripen on counter, then store in fridge. Store loose.</td>
<td><strong>Celery</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store in a plastic bag or sealed container.</td>
<td><strong>Herbs, woody</strong> (rosemary, sage)</td>
<td>Fridge. Wrap in a damp towel and store in a sealed container.</td>
<td><strong>Squash - summer</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Wrap whole or sliced pieces in a damp towel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bananas</strong></td>
<td>Counter. Store away from other fruits and vegetables.</td>
<td><strong>Cherries</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store in a plastic bag or sealed container. Wash just before eating to avoid mold.</td>
<td><strong>Leafy greens</strong> (lettuce, kale)</td>
<td>Fridge. Remove bands and ties. Store in a sealed container lined with a damp towel.</td>
<td><strong>Squash - winter</strong></td>
<td>Cupboard/Pantry. Store loose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Basil</strong></td>
<td>Counter. Remove bands and ties. Trim stems and store in water with a plastic bag over the top.</td>
<td><strong>Citrus fruits</strong></td>
<td>Fridge – crisper drawer. Store loose.</td>
<td><strong>Mushrooms</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store in a paper bag.</td>
<td><strong>Stone fruits</strong> (peaches, plums)</td>
<td>Ripen on counter, then store in fridge. Store loose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beans</strong> (green, wax)</td>
<td>Fridge. Store in a plastic bag or sealed container.</td>
<td><strong>Corn</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store loose, keep in husks.</td>
<td><strong>Melons</strong></td>
<td>Ripen on counter, then store in fridge. Store loose.</td>
<td><strong>Tomatillos</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store in a paper bag.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Berries</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store in a container, lid ajar and lined with a dry towel. Wash just before eating to avoid mold.</td>
<td><strong>Cucumbers</strong></td>
<td>Fridge – crisper drawer. Store loose.</td>
<td><strong>Mushrooms</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Store in a paper bag.</td>
<td><strong>Tropical fruit</strong> (kiwi, pineapple, mangos)</td>
<td>Ripen on counter, then store in fridge. Store loose.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Broccolini</strong></td>
<td>Fridge – crisper drawer. Wrap in a damp paper towel.</td>
<td><strong>Garlic</strong></td>
<td>Fridge. Wipe, store in a container.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Apart is better than together
Many fruits give off natural gases that cause nearby produce to ripen and spoil faster. Store fruits such as ripe bananas, avocados, apples and tomatoes away from other produce. Store veggies and fruit in separate fridge drawers.

Spruce up limp greens
Immerse in ice water for 30 minutes or place upright in a glass of water for a few hours.

Keep ready-to-eat snacks cool
Always refrigerate cut or peeled produce. Store in clear containers so you can see what's inside.

For a complete database of food storage tips and their shelf lives, check out StillTasty.com or EatByDate.com.