

# FDA FACT SHEET

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

### *Tips to Reduce Food Waste*

We can all play a part in reaching the national food waste reduction goal – to reduce food waste by 50% by the year 2030. Start using these tips today to reduce food waste, save money, and protect the environment.

### At the grocery store or when eating out

- Preplan and write your shopping list before going to the grocery store. As you write your list, think about what meals you will be preparing the following week, and check your fridge to see what items you already have.
- When at the store, buy only what you need and stick to your shopping list. Be careful when buying in bulk, especially with items that have a limited shelf life.
- If available, purchase “ugly” fruits or vegetables that often get left behind at the grocery store but are safe to eat. “Ugly” produce has physical imperfections but are not damaged or rotten. “Ugly” fruits and vegetables are safe and nutritious and can sometimes be found at discounted prices.
- When eating out, ask for smaller portions to prevent plate waste and keep you from overeating. You can also request a take-away box to take leftovers home instead of leaving food on your plate.

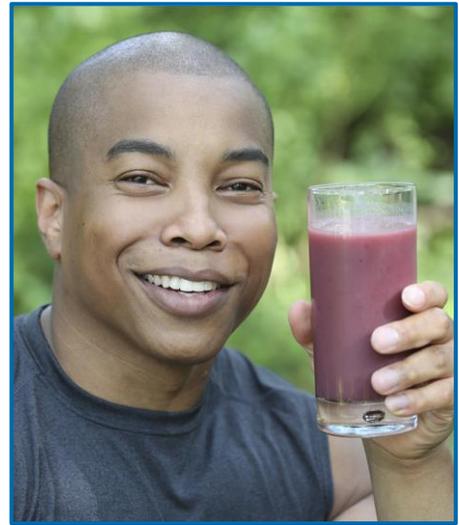


### In the kitchen – storage and prep

- Check the temperature setting of your fridge. Keep the temperature at 40° F or below to keep foods safe. The temperature of your freezer should be 0° F.
- Use the FoodKeeper App (<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/>) for information on how to safely store different foods to maintain freshness and quality.
- Refrigerate peeled or cut veggies for freshness and to keep them from going bad.
- Use your freezer! Freezing is a great way to store most foods to keep them from going bad until you are ready to eat them. Check the FoodKeeper App (<https://www.foodsafety.gov/keep/foodkeeperapp/>) for information on how long different items can be stored in the freezer.
- Create a designated space in your fridge for foods that you think will be going bad within a few days.
- Check your fridge often to keep track of what you have and what needs to be used. Eat or freeze items before you need to throw them away.
- If you have more food on hand than you can use or you need, consider donating your extra supply of packaged foods to a local food pantry or a food drive.
- Learn about food product date labels – not all dates refer to the safety of the item! Date labels such as *Use by* or *Best by* often refer to the best quality of an item. Just because the date on a package has passed does not mean the food is unsafe. However, if an item is soft, discolored, moldy, or has a strong unpleasant smell, it is probably not safe to eat and you should throw it away.

## At home – cooking, serving, and enjoying food with family and friends

- Use “ugly” fruits or vegetables to whip up healthy smoothies and soups for your friends or family. No one will notice the difference!
- Be creative and have fun! Create new dishes and snacks with leftovers or items you think will go bad if not eaten soon. Have a cook off to find out who can come up with the best dish.
- Follow the 2-Hour Rule. For safety reasons, don't leave perishables out at room temperature for more than two hours, unless you're keeping it hot or cold. If the temperature is above 90° F, food shouldn't be left out for more than one hour. Also, remember to refrigerate leftovers within two hours.
- Use serving size information on the Nutrition Facts label to help you portion meals or snacks. You can always add more to your plate after finishing off the first helping.
- Prepared too much food for a party at your home? Pack extras in containers for guests to take home or take some over to a neighbor as a nice gesture.
- Have a friendly competition with your friends or family members to see who can go the longest without any food waste.



### For more information:

- Food Waste Food Facts - <http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/UCM529381.htm>

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