

Food Safety Guidelines

Category	Product(s)	Typical Life (Quality)
Eggs	Federally graded	3-5 weeks after date on container
Frozen Products		6 months to 1 year
Glass & Plastic Jars	Hermetically Sealed (airtight)	2-5 years after date on container (unopened)
Juice	Refrigerated	1-several weeks
Milk		5-7 days past date on container when stored between 35°- 40°F. Canned milk or milk in aseptic packaging is shelf stable and will last at least 1 year unopened
Mixes	Cake, muffin, etc.	6 months
Pouches	Tuna, etc.	6 months (unopened)
Rice & Pasta Products (dry)		Up to 3 years
Salad Dressings (including mayonnaise)		Indefinite
Yogurt & Sour Cream		7-10 days past the date on the container

Many of our eggs are farm fresh or packed by Second Harvest. The dates on the cartons do not refer to the eggs in the package.



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Food Pantry Guide

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We are a 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organization devoted to Caring for Hunger, Education, and Wellness in our rural communities in partnership with our schools, organizations, churches, businesses, and caring individuals.

Food Safety Guidelines

Category	Product(s)	Typical Life (Quality)
Baby food & formula	Formula, wet food	Do not use after date on container
	Dry infant cereal	Can be used after date
Bakery Items	Bread, rolls, etc.	Up to 1 week after date on package. Unpreserved breads may only last 3-4 days before mold appears
Boxed Dinners		Indefinite
Butter & margarine		Indefinite
Canned Products	High Acid: canned fruit, fruit juices, tomato products, and pickled foods	12-18 months
	Low Acid: canned meat, poultry, fish, soup (not tomato), vegetables (not tomato), and pasta products	2-5 years
Cereals, Chips & Crackers		6 months-2 years when stored in cool, dry conditions
Cheese	Soft	7-10 days
	Hard	Several weeks
Condiments	Ketchup, mustard, etc.	Indefinite

Food Safety Guidelines

The following are *guidelines* regarding the quality and safety of food for eating. If any food has a foul odor, discoloration, or other signs of spoilage, throw it out and do not eat it.

Many people are confused about how long to keep a product after its date has passed. The answer to this question depends on a number of factors. Some are simple, others are complicated.

The code dates on packages are for use at the supermarket and indicate how long the package should be displayed on the shelves. These dates have very little to do with whether the food is safe to consume.

Some foods received by our food pantry are past the “sell by” or “use by” dates. For canned foods, this means that the food is at its peak nutritional value and peak taste at that time, after which both decline at a very slow rate. In the case of frozen food, it can be used for years past these dates as long as the food has remained frozen. It might not taste quite as good, but it’s perfectly safe to eat.

Refrigeration and Freezing: Refrigerate foods between 34 and 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Freezer temperatures should never be above 0 degrees Fahrenheit. Food that is exposed to the temperature danger zone between 41-135 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 4 hours may become unsafe to eat.

Never re-freeze thawed food: Pantry meats may be frozen prior to their expiration date. Prepare the entire product immediately after thawing. Previously frozen foods should never be thawed and then re-frozen.

Inspect cans for damage: Discard bulging, rusted or severely dented cans with metal touching metal, opened or leaking packages and broken seals.

The Gathering Source

Food Pantry



Our food pantry is open on Tuesdays from 10-noon and Thursdays from 5-7 pm. We offer a variety of foods. You may use the pantry twice per month and come on Wednesday and Saturday for extra bakery. Please bring bags or boxes to transport your food home.

Resource Center



Our Resource Center includes brochures and publications about local events and services.

Information changes each month, so be sure to stop in regularly!

Don't see what you need, just ask!

Community Events and Services



Please visit thegatheringsource.org and register for our newsletter for current events and services OR

Check our bulletin boards and sign up sheets when visiting The Gathering Source.

Welcome

You can always expect a smiling face and helping hand. Be sure to check out the Resource Center for area events, services, and information.

Registration:

You will need the following:

A photo ID and ***proof of physical address*** for all adults living in the household.

Full names and dates of birth of all members of your household.

We collect information that assists us in determining the needs of our clients. This information is also used to collect data necessary for reporting and seeking funding.

Any information you provide is confidential and not shared with any outside source.

When you visit the pantry:

You will need a photo ID.

Please bring reusable bags, boxes, or other containers to transport your food home. If you have any Box Tops or Labels for Education you may have clipped, drop them off. We collect these to support our Dodgeland Schools.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What is the best day to come to the food pantry? No one day is better than another. Our food delivery days vary as do the items we are able to get from Second Harvest.

How often can I visit the pantry? Pantry visits are limited to two times during a calendar month.

Can I come back another day to exchange food I received from the pantry? Our agreement with Second Harvest of Southern Wisconsin prohibits us from exchanging food.

Do you offer financial assistance? No. We are not able to offer this type of assistance due to our limited resources. Check out our Resource Center for Dodge County Services and Assistance.

What happen if I get food that is bad? Never consume food with a foul odor! We follow strict safety standards for inspecting and storing food. Our meat comes directly from the butcher or Second Harvest and is stored immediately after received. Please record as much information from the package to include any dates so we can provide feedback. We apologize for any inconvenience. See our Food Safety Guidelines.

What do you do with the information I provide? The information you provide is strictly for the use of The Gathering Source. ***Your information is confidential and we do not share it with any other agency or business.***

Where do you get the food for the pantry? We are able to stock our pantry through the generous contributions of local businesses, churches, organizations and community members. We are a proud partner of Second Harvest of Southern Wisconsin and are able to get our food at a reduced cost. Certain foods are provided by Second Harvest free of charge.

Can I volunteer? We may not use pantry clients to work food pantry. This is prohibited through our partnership agreement with Second Harvest.

Why do some clients get more food than me? Our food quantities are distributed by the size of a household.