

It's All About Balance: Eat Smart, Move More, Rest Well

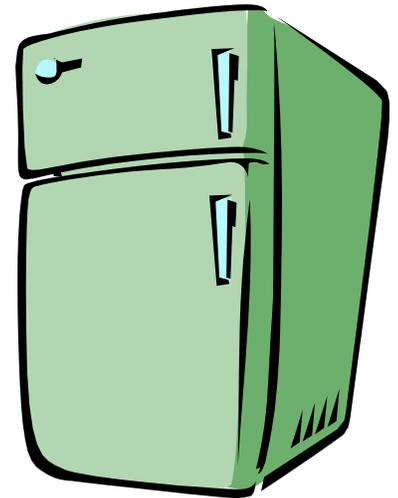
4 Tasty Ways to Keep Fruits and Vegetables Fresh

Keep fruits and vegetables fresh on your countertop.

Many fruits do best when they are ripened on the counter, then refrigerated once fully ripe. Foods in this group include melons, peaches, plums and nectarines. It also includes avocados and tomatoes. This also works for more tropical fruits, such as bananas, papayas and mangoes. Do not leave fruit in plastic bags on counters. This can slow the ripening process and may lead to rotten spots. Paper bags allow better airflow and are fine for most fruits.

Keep fruits and vegetables fresh in your refrigerator.

Most other fresh fruits/veggies are best stored in a clean refrigerator. Put produce in plastic bags with holes to allow for air flow. Use crisper drawers for whole produce. Store fruits and vegetables separately. Fruits give off a gas that can shorten the storage life of other items. Vegetables (like broccoli) give off odors that can affect the taste and quality of fruits. Be sure to keep meat, poultry and fish separate from produce.



Keep fruits and vegetables fresh in your cupboards.

Some produce items are best stored in a clean, dry, airy space with no direct light - like in a cupboard. Foods in this group include potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams and winter squash (acorn, butternut, Hubbard, etc.). This also includes garlic and onions. When storing canned products in cupboards, use the **FIFO** rule—**First In, First Out**. Write the month and year of purchase on top of the can or jar. This makes it easy to decide which products to use first.

Keep fruits and vegetables fresh in your freezer.

You can keep extra summer fruits and veggies in your freezer. Be sure to follow the **FIFO** rule for frozen produce as well. If you have never frozen fresh produce before, here are two useful guides. To learn more about freezing fruits, go to <http://msuextension.org/publications/HomeHealthandFamily/MT198330HR.pdf>. For vegetables, go to <http://msuextension.org/publications/HomeHealthandFamily/MT198331HR.pdf>.

Want more information about the best way to store specific fruits and veggies? At www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/, you will find a fruit and vegetable database. You can search for lots of information on choosing and storing fruits and veggies. On the same site, you can find recipes and nutrition information. There are also tips on ways to get your family to eat more fruits and vegetables.



National Nutrition Month® - March 2009
Adapted by the Nutrition Services Branch from www.eatrightmontana.org.
N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health
www.ncdhhs.gov • www.nutritionnc.com

