

## FREEZING TIPS

Modern freezing is one of the easiest, most convenient and least time consuming food preservation techniques. Properly frozen food keeps much of its fresh flavor and nutrients.

### FACTORS AFFECTING FOOD QUALITY

- **Enzymes**—freezing slows enzyme activity which alters texture, color and flavor
- **Air**—oxygen can cause flavor and color changes in improperly packaged food
- **Microorganisms**—do not grow at freezing temperatures but are not destroyed
- **Ice Crystals**—the smaller the better, the quicker something freezes the smaller the crystals
- **Freezer temperature**—0°F or lower (use a freezer thermometer)
- **Moisture evaporation**—proper air removal in packaging helps prevent evaporation of ice crystals that cause dried out, or freezer burned food

### FREEZING POINTERS

- Freeze foods at 0°F or lower. To facilitate more rapid freezing, set the temperature control at -10°F or lower about 24 hours in advance.
- Freeze foods as soon as they are packed and sealed.
- Do not overload your freezer with unfrozen food. Add only the amount that will freeze within 24 hours, which is usually 2 to 3 pounds of food per cubic foot of storage space. Overloading slows down the freezing rate, and foods that freeze too slowly may lose quality.
- Place packages in contact with surfaces in the coldest part of the freezer.

- Leave a little space between packages so air can circulate freely. Then, when the food is frozen, store the packages close together.
- Leave proper headspace in the container to allow for expansion.

### PACKAGING FOR FREEZING

- Moisture and vapor resistant
- Durable and leak-proof
- Not become brittle and crack at low temperatures
- Resistant to oil, grease or water
- Protect foods from absorption of off flavors or odors
- Easy to seal and easy to label

### OTHER IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

- Blanching helps improve the color and texture of frozen food.
- IQF - Individual Quick Freezing: spread and separate food on a tray and freeze, then repackage. Works well for fruits and some vegetables.

### THAWING

- **Refrigerator thawing**—plan ahead as this is the safest way for meats
- **Cold water thawing**—submerge in water-proof container of cold water, changing water every 30 minutes, use immediately
- **Microwave thawing**—fine for certain foods, but uneven, can start cooking, use immediately
- **Cooking without thawing**—move food straight from freezer to pot

**Always thaw perishable foods in the refrigerator!**

## REFERENCES

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## IMPORTANT SAFETY NOTE

Research on food preservation is ongoing, and recommendations may change. Make sure your information is current. Always follow up-to-date, tested guidelines and recipes from reliable sources.

## LOCAL CONTACT

For more information, contact the University of California Cooperative Extension office in your county. See your telephone directory for addresses and phone numbers, or visit [http://mfp.ucanr.edu/Contact/Find\\_a\\_Program/](http://mfp.ucanr.edu/Contact/Find_a_Program/).

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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