



In the Refrigerator

Keep your refrigerator cold. That sounds silly, but food will spoil faster if the temperature is too warm. Does your milk smell sour before you can drink it all? The refrigerator temperature may be higher than you think. Use a refrigerator thermometer to check the temperature—it should register between 34 and 40 degrees. In this temperature range, bacteria that spoil food grow slowly. Below 32 degrees, bacteria survive but won't grow—but food freezes! Has your fridge ever gotten too cold and frozen the lettuce? You may want to buy a thermometer at the store.

Store all food in the refrigerator in covered containers. That keeps food from drying out and flavors from mixing. Packages of raw meat, fish and poultry should be kept on a plate or in separate plastic bags that keep juices from dripping on other foods. The lowest shelf in the refrigerator is usually the coldest, and that is good for meat.

Cold air needs to circulate in your fridge, so don't pack it too full. Use special compartments for vegetables to keep them crisp, and if you have a meat keeper, it helps the meat stay fresh longer. The temperature in the



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door varies the most from opening and closing, so don't store eggs in the door. They are best stored in the original carton.

Keep shelves clean, and toss any food that has become moldy. Keep leftovers near the front of the fridge and use within 3 or 4 days. One of the most important refrigerator rules is to have kids make quick food choices when opening the door so the food inside stays cold.

For recipes: Contact your county extension office in Kansas or visit the website at www.kidsacookin.ksu.edu

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