

Food Spoilage Prevention: Step-by-Step

1. **Store Food at the Right Temperature**
Keep perishable foods like meat, dairy, and vegetables refrigerated or frozen to slow bacterial growth.
2. **Check Expiration Dates**
Always check food packaging for expiration dates before purchasing or consuming food.
3. **Use First In, First Out (FIFO)**
Rotate older food to the front and newer food to the back of storage areas to ensure older items are used first.
4. **Seal Food Properly**
Use airtight containers or resealable bags to store food and prevent contamination or exposure to air.
5. **Keep Storage Areas Clean**
Regularly clean refrigerators, freezers, and pantry shelves to prevent mold, bacteria, and pests.
6. **Avoid Cross-Contamination**
Store raw meat separately from ready-to-eat foods, and use separate cutting boards for different food types.
7. **Monitor Humidity Levels**
Keep humidity in check in storage areas to avoid excess moisture, which can promote mold and spoilage.
8. **Inspect for Signs of Spoilage**
Regularly check stored food for signs of mold, off smells, discoloration, or slimy textures that indicate spoilage.
9. **Defrost Safely**
Thaw frozen food in the refrigerator, microwave, or under cold running water, not on the countertop, to prevent bacterial growth.
10. **Cook Food Thoroughly**
Ensure food is cooked to the correct temperature to kill harmful bacteria that can cause foodborne illnesses.
11. **Cool Leftovers Quickly**
After cooking, cool leftovers within two hours and refrigerate them in shallow containers to reduce bacteria growth.
12. **Dispose of Spoiled Food**
If food is visibly spoiled, smells off, or is past its expiration date, discard it immediately to avoid health risks.