



TRINITY
school of natural health

3 Ways to Keep

Produce from Spoiling

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After you've picked the best produce available, you want to do everything possible to keep it from spoiling prematurely. Buying fresh fruits and vegetables is an investment, and it can feel like a waste when you're forced to throw items in the trash because they're overripe.

To get the most out of your purchases, there are three questions you should ask yourself:

- 1. Does this need to be refrigerated?*
- 2. Am I storing this in the right packaging?*
- 3. How do I keep this from getting moldy?*

The tips in this eBook will help you answer these questions. Read on to learn how to keep your produce fresh for the maximum amount of time.

REFRIGERATE WISELY

Refrigeration requirements will vary by product. The environment in which fruits and vegetables are grown will dictate how you should store them. Tropical fruits like bananas, melons, papayas, pineapples, and mangoes can withstand high temperatures. In contrast, grapes, apricots, berries, and cherries are grown in more temperate areas, so you need to refrigerate them to keep them fresh.¹

Whether you refrigerate or keep items at room temperature, always store produce separately to keep it fresh for a longer period of time.



Vegetables are usually stored effectively in a sealed container in your fridge. The main exceptions are potatoes, tomatoes, and onions. They are most flavorful when kept at a cool room temperature.² If you have fruits or vegetables that are only ripe for a couple of days before spoiling, keep them on the counter until they have ripened; then store them in your refrigerator. This will help them stay fresh longer before they spoil. Avocados, peaches, and nectarines all fall into this category.

Whether you refrigerate or keep items at room temperature, always store produce separately to keep it fresh for a longer period of time. Both fruits and vegetables release the plant hormone ethylene, which helps them ripen, but fruits release more of it than vegetables.³ When they're stored together, vegetables can spoil prematurely due to the gases emitted by the ripening fruit.



CONSIDER PACKAGING

Airflow impacts the freshness of your produce, so keep in mind how containers might be affecting the items on your counter or in your fridge.⁴ Mushrooms, bell peppers, and cucumbers all need to be kept in the refrigerator and away from water to stay fresh. If you leave them in a package that allows air inside, the resulting condensation can cause produce to spoil more quickly. Use a clip or tight knot to prevent air from getting into the packaging. Make sure to also dry off these items before storing them in any packaging.

Items like citrus fruits and tomatoes require airflow to retain freshness, so it is better to keep them in an open container. However, be careful to avoid cross-contamination with items like raw meat or fastripening fruits. By storing your raw meat on a low shelf in the refrigerator, you can keep it from dripping on any open produce.

When you store fruits and vegetables at room temperature, keep them in an area that has good circulation. If you don't take them out of their original packaging, the restricted airflow can cause them to spoil faster. For example, when you buy bananas, potatoes, or onions that come in a plastic bag, remove the produce and set it in the open so it can breathe.⁵ Refrigerated produce is the opposite, however, and often stays at its prime when it is sealed. You can keep them in regular plastic bags or invest in reusable containers that help you cut down on waste.

**Important to note:*

One of the most common causes of mold is ineffective refrigerator temperatures, followed closely by improperly sealed produce.



AVOID MOLD

One of the most common causes of mold is ineffective refrigerator temperatures, followed closely by improperly sealed produce.⁶ Try to reduce the likelihood of mold by ensuring your refrigerator is kept at or below 40 degrees Fahrenheit. You should also doublecheck your produce before storing it to ensure you've tightly closed the lid on a container or sealed a plastic bag.

With many fruits and vegetables, wetness encourages mold growth. To keep your produce from being exposed to excess water, try not to wash anything until right before you're ready to eat it. This will help your fruits and vegetables stay fresh in the refrigerator.⁷ Berries are the only exception to this rule; in fact, washing them might be the first thing you do. But there is

one catch: you should soak them in warm water rather than cold. Research has shown that giving berries a hot-water bath for about 12 seconds can inhibit mold growth.⁸ However, any remaining moisture should be dried to increase the effectiveness of the hot-water bath.

Temperature can also impact molding, which is why it is important to keep fruits and vegetables away from uncharacteristically warm environments where bacteria thrive. Natural gas can increase ripening and result in mold production, so avoid storing produce close to your stove, oven, or anything else that produces smoke or heat.⁹

Conclusion **3 Ways to Keep Produce from Spoiling**

You're taking the time to carefully select the right produce, which is why we want to help you keep it fresh. By educating yourself on the best storage options and avoiding potentially harmful environments for your fruits and vegetables, you can provide delicious, healthy meals for you and your family.

If you love learning tips and tricks like these, consider becoming a Certified Nutritional Consultant. You'll learn how everything you eat impacts your development, mood, energy, and ability to function at the most basic level, and you can do it all in an online program. To learn more about becoming a Certified Nutritional Consultant, call 800-428-0408, option 2.





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