



We are committed to achieving and supporting a long-term healthy environment in Wilmot and Wellesley Townships through education, action and collaboration.

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Top Tips for Preventing Food Waste

1. “Shop your kitchen” first. Check your cupboards, fridge and freezer before you go grocery shopping. This will help you to plan meals and use up all the food and leftovers that you already have. Plan your meals for the week, take a grocery shopping list with you, and stick to it so you only buy what you need.
2. Remember “the rule of 2” for leftovers. Get them into the fridge within 2 hours of cooking; eat them within 2 days; or put them in the freezer and (ideally) eat within 2 months. Label your containers in the freezer so you don’t end up with a bunch of UFOs (unidentified frozen objects).
3. Understand dates on food products. The only date appearing on food that has anything to do with “safety” is the “**use by**” date. “**Best before**” dates have to do with food quality – they are **not** expiry dates! After this date foods may lose some of their freshness, texture, flavour and nutritional value but they are still safe to eat. For example, yogurt with a best before date of today is still good (and safe) to eat for another 7 to 10 days whether it is open or unopened. “Best before” dates are only required on foods that stay fresh for 90 days or less. Only a few foods — like infant formula and formulated liquid diets — actually have expiry dates. Good news: You can freeze food right up until the “**use by**” date.
4. Keep your fridge between 1 and 4 degrees Celsius. Up to 70% of fridges are too warm resulting in food not lasting as long as it could. Use a fridge thermometer to check if you are in doubt. The door is the warmest part of your fridge, so use it to store things like drinks and sauces, not your milk or cheese.
5. Have an “**Eat Me First**” shelf, bin or basket in the fridge where you put “older” food, leftovers, and foods with a short shelf life that need to be eaten quickly. When you buy new food, bring all the older items to the front of the fridge and put the new food at the back.
6. Don’t overfill your fridge, as air needs to circulate in order to keep your food cold. If your fridge is too full, put some things into the freezer to extend the life of what isn’t getting eaten right away.
7. Get tips, tricks and other “optimal storage” information for most foods on the “**Save the Food**” website (<https://savethefood.com/storage>). Find out what foods should be kept in the fridge, which can be frozen, and other useful tips about storage and preventing waste by using up what you have.
8. Go against your instincts when you are shopping and occasionally buy the overripe fruit; the item with an earlier rather than a later “best before” date; the imperfect looking produce; and the last item on display. That food is headed for the dumpster if no one buys it!
9. Donate! Swimming in leftovers or perishable garden produce or fruit? Bring it to your workplace or local food bank, share with neighbours and family, or check online to see which charities take food donations.