

# tasty times

important updates for success and more resources from the child care healthy food program



## Dear Child Care Provider,

Do you ever spend more time than you'd like standing over the fruits and vegetables in the produce section? What about digging through a picked-over pile of potatoes to try to find one that isn't misshapen? Do you find yourself tossing out large amounts of uneaten food at the end of the week?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you aren't alone. According to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, almost 40 percent of food waste is created by consumers throwing out their uneaten groceries. This issue of *Tasty Times* aims to help you save time at the grocery store and prevent food waste at home.

—Chloe Nivala,  
Healthy Food Program Clerk



## Food Waste

### Is it safe to eat bruised produce?

Generally, yes. However, it is important to examine the fruit for mold. If the fruit has visible mold or smells like mold, throw it out. Be sure to double-check the stem for any mold growth as well. Fruit stems are particularly vulnerable to mold growth as they serve as an entry point to the inside of the fruit.



mold growth scare you away from bruised fruit; just remember to check before consuming. Keep in mind that the molds that most often result in illness are most present on cheese, grains and nuts.

### Looks can be deceiving:

Although a bruised apple or crooked carrot may not look that visually pleasing, they are just as nutritious and tasty as their more attractive counterparts. If the fruit or vegetable has a small bruise, consider buying it anyways and just cutting out the bruised section. If the bruised section covers a large surface area, cut out the multiple bruised sections, mash it and make muffins or a smoothie. Alternatively, incorporate discolored or bruised produce into a stew.

### Leftovers:

When you are cooking for a group of people, it can be difficult to guess just how much food to make. If you have leftovers after a meal, don't throw them out. Get creative instead! Try incorporating them into a casserole, stir fry bowl, or wrap them up in a tortilla and heat in a skillet. Invest in Tupperware and portion them out, date them with a sharpie, and store them

## Healthy Food Program Number

For the Out of Home voicemail, payment information or to speak to a customer service representative:

Call:  
**(773) 564-8861**



Bruising happens when the skin or peel of the fruit is damaged and allows oxygen to permeate (break through) the surface and break down the cells of the fruit. This process is called oxidation and it causes the brown color and mushy texture. Mold growth can happen because bruised fruit flesh allows nutrients to leak out into the surface of the fruit and mix with microbes that are in the air or already on the skins surface. Don't let potential

*Continued*

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## Attention providers!

Effective October 1, 2019, the new CACFP meal pattern went into effect for the Healthy Food Program. As part of these changes, the USDA has reduced the number of infant groups from 3 (0-3 months, 4-7 months, and 8-11 months) to 2 (0-5 months and 6-11 months). Infants 6-11 months are expected to receive foods from all food groups at meals and snacks once the child is developmentally-ready to receive them.

It is the expectation that children 8 months and older are developmentally-ready to receive all foods. If you have a child that is not developmentally-ready (or a child whose parents do not believe is developmentally ready at 8 months of age), please notify the Healthy Food Program.

## Welcome New Providers!

Stephanie Lopez-Herrera  
Sade Primous  
Izcoatl Rodriguez  
Edith Sanchez-Perez  
Phillip Steward

Remember,  
**January** claims are due **February 5!**  
**Warning! Late claims WILL result in late payment!**



Illinois Action for Children,  
4753 N. Broadway, Suite 1200,  
Chicago, IL 60640  
main: 312-823-1100  
direct: 773-564-8861  
fax: 773-564-8721  
web: [www.actforchildren.org](http://www.actforchildren.org)

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## Food Waste *Continued*



in your freezer. The benefit to keeping them in the freezer is that they will last longer than if you were to keep them in your refrigerator.

If you find yourself with many leftovers after every meal or tossing out expired food every week, you may want to scale down on the amount of groceries you buy. This can prevent unnecessary food waste and save money.

### Freezing prevents waste:

As mentioned above, freezing is a great way to prevent food waste and spoilage. Leftovers aren't the only food that benefit from freezing. Frozen produce is often cheaper than fresh produce and it has a similar nutritional value. In fact, according to multiple articles published by the National Institute of Health, frozen fruits and veggies may



contain a higher amount of Vitamin C than fresh. Don't stop at just frozen produce—bread and meat can be safely frozen to extend their shelf-life as well. With a little meal-planning and some free time, you can also prepare healthy meals in single servings to thaw and reheat for when you don't feel like making a whole dinner from scratch.

## Date Labeling:

Familiarize yourself with food product dating and pay attention to the difference in wording. According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Dates on food labels are not an indication of food safety; instead, they are an indication of food quality. These dates are not federally regulated and are added voluntarily by the food companies. Think of food product dating as a suggestion, not a rule. Infant formula, however, IS federally regulated and should always be thrown out after the expiration date.



**“Best if used by/used before”** suggests when the food should be consumed by to experience peak freshness. This means that if consumed past the best-by date, the food might taste a little stale, or the flavor might be dull, but it hasn't necessarily gone bad.

**“Use by”** indicates the last day the manufacturer recommends consuming the food. After this date, the quality of the food might drop off quickly and it may spoil faster.

**“Sell by”** indicates how long the store should keep the food on their shelves for inventory purposes. The “sell by” date does not indicate how long the product will last.

**We hope this edition of Tasty Times prompts you to reconsider tossing out your less than perfect produce. If you make some of the small changes listed in this edition of Tasty Times, you might find yourself with a little more money in your pocket and fewer trips to the grocery store.**

