



How To Reduce Food Waste At Home

by Dr. Jean Buzby

(NAPS)—Here's a cool idea: A clean, well-organized refrigerator can help your family prevent food waste.

Three Ways To Fight Food Waste

1. Know and, if necessary, reorganize your fridge and pantry. Keep your refrigerator and pantry clean and organized so you can see what needs to be eaten first. If fresh food is “out of sight, out of mind,” it may be forgotten until it's no longer fresh and so ultimately wasted. Food is less likely to go bad when you use the more perishable and older items first.

Also, storing food in clear containers can help you see what you have available in your fridge and pantry and can help you avoid buying food you already have.

In the fridge, extend the life of your food by putting it in the right place. For example, the temperature in the refrigerator door fluctuates more than the cabinets or the back of the unit so don't store such perishable foods as milk in the door.

2. Download the FoodKeeper App. The USDA, the Food Marketing Institute, and Cornell University jointly created FoodKeeper, which is available free at the Google Play or iTunes stores, or via desktop at www.usda.gov/foodlossandwaste.

FoodKeeper provides guidance on safe handling, preparation, and storage of more than 650 foods and beverages. With the app, you can track storage times for different foods, see cooking tips, watch helpful videos, and get information on food recalls. Users can also set up calendar reminders for when products are nearing their recommended storage date.

3. Love your leftovers. Give leftovers a makeover when you reuse them in rec-



Keep your refrigerator well organized and it can help you keep your health and wealth.

ipes. Add broccoli stems to a salad or omelet or blend overripe fruit and peels into a low-fat smoothie. My favorite all-time smoothie was made from about-to-expire chocolate yogurt and wilting blueberries and raspberries. Make broth from vegetable and/or meat trimmings, and freeze what you don't plan to eat right away.

Be creative while keeping leftover safety in mind. If you cook often and typically have loads of leftovers, consider having one dinner a week designated as Leftover Night.

Many foods can also be safely frozen indefinitely, so if you can't use something perishable before it may spoil, pop it in the freezer. Check the FoodKeeper app to see if your item may be frozen.

Mindfulness about food and food waste prevention in general can also help save you time and money. USDA estimates that each year at the consumer level, around \$1,500 of food goes uneaten per family of four. Imagine what your family could do with that kind of money.

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