Since product dates aren’t a guide for safe use of a product, consult this chart and follow these tips. These short but safe time limits will help keep refrigerated food 40° F (4° C) from spoiling or becoming dangerous.

- Purchase the product before “sell-by” or expiration dates.
- Follow handling recommendations on product.
- Keep meat and poultry in its package until just before using.
- If freezing meat and poultry in its original package longer than 2 months, wrap these packages with airtight heavy-duty foil, plastic wrap, or freezer paper, or place the package inside a plastic bag.

Because freezing 0° F (-18° C) keeps food safe indefinitely, the following recommended storage times are for quality only.