

# To avoid food poisoning, there's an app for that

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(HealthDay)—There are apps for maps, restaurants and calorie-counting.

Now, there's even one from the U.S. government for reducing your risk of foodborne illness.

The FoodKeeper app—free from the U.S. Department of Agriculture—is available for Apple and Android devices. It enables users to set up automatic notifications when foods and beverages are nearing the end of their recommended storage dates.

Showing how foods and beverages should be stored in the refrigerator, freezer and pantry, the app helps people select storage methods that extend the life of more than 400 items. These include baby food, dairy products, eggs, meat, poultry, seafood and produce, according to the USDA.

"Cooking advice is also offered to ensure users prepare products in ways that eliminate [foodborne bacteria](#)," the agency said in a news release.

Each year in the United States, 133 billion pounds of available food—worth about \$161 billion—goes uneaten, often because of safety concerns, according to the USDA.

Did you know that your refrigerator plays a crucial role in preventing foodborne illness? Keeping the fridge below 40 degrees Fahrenheit reduces the growth of illness-causing organisms, the USDA said.

Also, storing too much in your fridge can interfere with air circulation. This means some sections may not chill quickly enough or evenly enough. Plus, it causes the refrigerator motor to run constantly, leading to higher utility bills, the agency noted.

The USDA suggests leaving at least an inch on all sides of items in the refrigerator for cold air to circulate around them, without blocking air vents.

Also important: keeping the front grill of your fridge clear of dust and lint so there is free airflow to the condenser.

The only way to kill [foodborne illness](#)-causing bacteria and other organisms is to cook food to a safe internal temperature. USDA-recommended temperatures are: 145 degrees F for whole cuts of beef, pork, lamb and veal (allow meat to rest for three minutes before carving and consuming); 160 degrees F for ground beef, pork, lamb and veal; and 165 degrees F for poultry.

**More information:** The U.S. Department of Agriculture has more about the FoodKeeper app and [food safety](#).

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