

Donated Food Checklist

Both SAFETY (whether a food is free of disease-causing bacteria and their toxins) and QUALITY (whether a food looks and smells acceptable to eat) should be kept in mind when examining donated food.

Beware of these signs that food may be UNSAFE to eat.

Foods Stored at Room Temperature

Cans

- Too crushed to stack on shelves or open with a manual can opener
- Crushed immediately under the double (end) seam
- Moderate/severe dents at the juncture of side and double (end) seam
- Rust pits severe enough to pierce the can
- Swollen or bulging ends
- Holes, fractures, or punctures
- Evidence of leakage
- Signs of spoilage (spurting; unusual odor or appearance) when opened
- Baby food or formula past the expiration date
- Missing label

Glass Jars

- Home-canned instead of commercially canned
- Raised, crooked, or loosened lid
- Damaged tamper-resistant seal
- Cracks or chips
- Signs of spoilage (discolored food; cloudy liquid)
- Dirt under the rim
- Baby food past the expiration date

Paperboard Cartons

- Torn or missing inner packaging in cartons that are slit or opened
- Evidence of insects

Plastic Containers

- Damaged tamper-resistant seal
- Signs of spoilage (mold, off odor)
- Baby food past the expiration date

Foods Stored in the Refrigerator

- Lukewarm food (above 40° Refrigerator temperature)
- Signs of spoilage (unusual odor or appearance, molds)
- Unsuitable containers (and/or covers) that allow food to be contaminated
- Uncertain handling "history" (questionable reputation of food source)
- Damaged tamper-resistant seals if commercially packaged

Foods Stored in the Freezer

- Evidence of thawing (ice on the food or leaking)
- Unsuitable packaging that allows food to be contaminated

IF IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

Don't rely on look or smell. Foods that cause food poisoning may look fine and smell acceptable.

Never taste suspicious foods!