

# Fight the Burn, not the Freezer!

Freezer burn develops due to either improper storage or the length of time left in the freezer. If improperly stored, some of the water that makes up the food turns into ice when combined with oxygen. Although the food is still safe to eat, the areas that have freezer burn tend to be drier and less tasty because moisture was released.

Unless you are planning on cooking and eating the frozen items in the next month or two, be sure to package your food well. The average time you should store food in the freezer is between 4-12 months; beyond this time, the food begins to decline in quality. Leftovers can be frozen up to 1-3 months.

## Tips to Help Prevent Freezer Burn:

1. Wrap your food tightly; any air will cause freezer burn. As an extra layer of caution, use aluminum foil or freezer paper and label with the date you put in the freezer. Sturdy zippered plastic bags also work.
2. Allow food to cool before freezing. Freezing food while still warm or hot will cause steam and then ice crystals to form.
3. Keep your freezer temperature at or below 0 degrees F. If your food begins to melt, water will form and create freezer burn.
4. Don't overstuff your refrigerator — it can raise the temperature.

## How to Prepare Food Already Freezer Burnt:

1. Do not microwave the food. Microwaves heat water molecules inside the food. Because the water is outside of the surface, this will dry out the food even more. Instead cook the food over the stovetop.
2. Cut off as much of the freezer burn as possible.
3. If the whole food is freezer burned, try adding sauce to the meal.

### Café 60 Dining in Lane County Call for Information

[www.laneseniormeals.org](http://www.laneseniormeals.org)

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