

# Food For Thought

TIPS ON TASTE, NUTRITION & HEALTH

## Cool Ideas For Keeping Food Safer, Fresher

(NAPSA)—Any time can be a good time to think about food safety in the home. Often, spoilage and food-related illness strike when food is stored improperly, whether the food is leftover or fresh from the store.

Here are a few easy guidelines people can follow to help keep the food they store fresher and safer longer.

- Keep cool. The refrigerator should be no higher than 40 degrees and the freezer should always be below 0 degrees.

- Plan ahead and try to buy fresh raw meat, poultry or seafood no more than one or two days before you eat them. Buy only the freshest food and, if you don't get to it in time, freeze it for safe long-term storage. And remember to always check the expiration date to ensure the product is still fresh before freezing.

- Don't allow foods to thaw at room temperature; put them in the refrigerator instead. Allow approximately one day for every five pounds of frozen fish, poultry or meat you need to thaw.

- Label and date food as you store it so you always know how long it has been in the fridge or freezer.

- Promptly refrigerate leftover food. Perishable cooked foods should not stay at room temperature more than two hours.

- As a rule of thumb when reheating leftovers or make-ahead meals, heat them to 175 degrees throughout for 15 seconds.



**Using a vacuum food sealer helps keep stored food fresher and safer longer.**

- The best way to keep food fresher and safer longer is with an airtight seal. Use a vacuum food sealer to remove the air from around stored food and keep it fresher up to five times longer than traditional wraps and storage containers.

Mold and bacteria can grow as a result of exposure to air and cause food spoilage. Air also causes oxidation, which robs food of fresh taste and can create “off” flavors and odors. In addition, air leads to dehydration, which can harden foods (especially meats) and lead to freezer burn. Vacuum food sealers work by removing air, helping to preserve the original taste and nutritional value of stored foods, keeping food safer and tasting better. Rival® Seal-a-Meal® recently introduced a new line of vacuum food sealers with unique features that make vacuum sealing at home easier than ever. To learn more, visit the web site at [www.seal-a-meal.com](http://www.seal-a-meal.com).