

# The freezer is your friend

## 1. Which of these foods can you freeze, and for how long?

	Freeze?	For how long?
Eggs	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Cooked Rice	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Bananas	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Soft cheese (e.g. Brie)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Cooked Pasta	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Yoghurt	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Green Beans	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Uncooked Chicken	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

## 2. When freezing foods do you have to

- Freeze food on the day you buy it?
- Freeze before the use by date?
- Freeze before the best before date?

## 3. What is the optimum temperature for a freezer?

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## 4. What is the best way to defrost food?

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## 5. How long can you keep the food once defrosted?

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## 6. Can you refreeze thawed food?

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## SESSION GUIDE

### Time

This session will take approximately 15 minutes, but can be made longer or shorter as required.

### Delivery technique

Breakout groups or individual exercise, followed by group discussion.

### Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to inform people that foods can theoretically be frozen forever, ie they never become unsafe to eat, they just simply deteriorate in quality – colour, flavour and texture. This exercise highlights that some foods deteriorate quicker than others.

### Session outline

1. Either individually or in breakout groups, hand out the activity sheet and give everyone about five minutes to complete the exercise .
2. When the majority of people have completed the sheet, ask for volunteers to share their ideas.
3. Encourage discussion on freezing and behaviours which help reduce waste.
4. Close the session by asking everyone for one thing that they will start doing as a result of the session, or for a tip they have learnt etc.

### Outcomes

Participants will be clear on what foods can be frozen and for how long. Also how to safely defrost food and how long it should be stored once defrosted. Also to know that they can safely freeze foods after the purchase date and before the use by date, and that it is safe to freeze foods after the best before date provided they haven't spoiled in any way (eg, mold).

### Questions and answers

Q. Which of these foods can you freeze, and for how long?

A. Eggs	6 months
Cooked Rice	3 months
Bananas	6 months
Soft cheese (e.g. Brie)	3 months
Cooked Pasta	3 months
Yoghurt	1 month
Green Beans	1 year
Uncooked Chicken	1 year

Q. When freezing foods do you have to:

- A. a. Freeze food on the day you buy it?  
60% of us think that food has to be frozen on the day of purchase but in reality most food that is suitable for freezing can be frozen any time before the date on the label, and retailers and brands are updating their labels to show this.
- b. Freeze before the use by date?  
Yes, any time before the date shown.
- c. Freeze before the best before date?  
No, the Best Before date is just for quality so the food can be frozen anytime provided it hasn't spoiled in any way.

Q. What is the optimum temperature for a freezer?

A. -18 degrees Celsius

Q. What is the best way to defrost food?

A. Defrost in the fridge, ideally overnight, and use within 24 hours after defrosting. Alternatively, if eating straightaway defrost in the microwave. Heat thoroughly until piping hot.

Q. How long can you keep the food once defrosted?

A. No longer than 24 hours

Q. Can you refreeze thawed food?

A. You must not refreeze defrosted food WITHOUT cooking and cooling first. If products are frozen raw in the home, then thawed and cooked, the product can be refrozen. If products are bought frozen, then thawed and cooked, the product can be refrozen.