



# FOOD STORAGE & ORGANIZATION 101

## Makeover your Fridge for Spring!



We teamed up with Registered Dietician **Abbey Sharp** of Abbey's Kitchen Inc. to get her tips on healthy ways to revamp your eating habits and give your fridge a much-needed makeover.

### Ethylene Sensitive Foods:

carrots, leafy greens, broccoli, potatoes, summer squash, green beans, cucumbers, apples & watermelon



### Ethylene Producing Foods:

avocados, bananas, cantaloupes, kiwis, pears, plums, peaches & tomatoes.

### Tip:

Try separating these foods in two different crisper drawers. Typically, **vegetables are ethylene sensitive**, and **fruits are ethylene producing**, so as an easy rule of thumb, store your vegetables and fruits in separate bins.

### Do's – Proper Food Storage

Some fruits and vegetables produce ethylene gas as they ripen. This gas can speed up the ripening process of foods – so its important to store your foods based on their ethylene sensitivity.



If you notice a rotten piece of fruit or veg in the crisper get rid of it immediately, because it can easily ruin the entire bunch of produce by letting off even more ethylene gas.

## Do's – Proper Food Storage



- Keep **onions** and **tomatoes** in a cool dry place but not in the fridge where they will lose flavour.
- Pears, **peaches**, kiwis, mangos, apricots, melons, **avocados** and **bananas** can be kept on the counter; once they are ripe enough, move to the fridge.
- **Salad Greens** and fresh herbs can be sealed tightly in a glad freezer or storage bag with a tiny bit of air and a small piece of paper towel.
- **Citrus** can be stored up to a week in a cool dark place away from sunlight or in a fridge for longer in a glad bag.
- Celery should be wrapped in press n' seal or cling wrap and stored in a veggie crisper.
- Avoid washing berries all at once, wash as you eat them because the water will cause mold growth.
- Store your prepared fruits and vegetables in clear, plastic containers so you can see what you have. Research suggests that the food we can see and is right in front of us is most likely to be consumed first.

## Plan Ahead- Organized Meal Preparation

**Make weeknight dinners fast, easy and healthy with these simple steps.**

Take everything out of the grocery bags when you're done shopping and invest 30-60 min in prep work. Wash, cut and store your veggies so they're easier to throw into stir fries or salads. Cut up fruit and divvy into glad bags for quick snacking and meal preparation.

On Sunday, try to utilize all of your appliances at once to maximize your time. Make a big batch of sauce, soup, stew or braised meat in the slow cooker. Bake off a few pounds of chicken breasts. Sauté up a bunch of vegetables or make a big batch of quinoa or rice on the stove top. Then divide all of the ingredients up either in plastic containers in the fridge if you plan to eat them within the next 2 days, or cool, and pack them into freezer bags that you can simply pull out, defrost, and rewarm throughout the week.

With all of these things, you can combine them in different combinations to make everything from a bowl of chili with bread and a big salad, to pasta, to stir fry with rice, to a healthy protein packed lunch salad with quinoa.

Plan for unconventional leftovers by mixing and matching dinner and breakfast staples. I love having eggs for dinner (they cook in mere minutes), or including quinoa in breakfast meals in place of oats (try mixing them with milk and berries for a high-protein, healthy meal).

## Trick yourself into making healthier choices

By simply re-arranging the food in your fridge, you will automatically make healthier choices without even noticing!

- Chop, clean and prep the healthiest foods on Sunday and store them on the shelf that is at eye level in Gladware containers or Glad bags (this will be the first thing you notice when opening your fridge).
- Studies suggest that we will eat more of something if it's easy to access and visible - so make those vegetables, dairy products, lean protein and fruit very visible!

- Pre-portion yourself out healthy snack size servings and store them right at eye level.
- If you have more decadent items that you want to pace yourself on (ie. leftover cupcakes or ice cream), place those at the bottom shelf in the back of the fridge so you don't see them immediately when you open the door and are famished. You can also try putting them in the downstairs trunk freezer where they're not so easy to access.

## Properly store foods in the fridge for food safety

Keep your leftovers in shallow containers so they cool quickly in the fridge and don't raise the temp of the fridge (and everything else in it.)

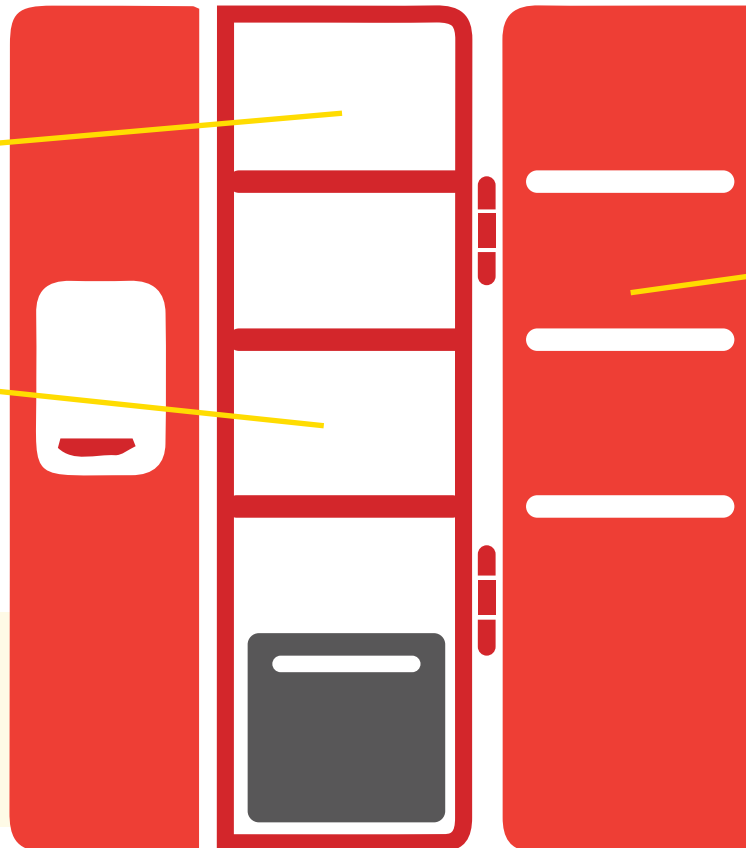
### UPPER SHELVES:

leftovers, drinks, ready to eat food like yogurt, cheese and deli meats

### LOWER SHELVES:

raw ingredients that you will use for cooked dishes.

**Note:** Raw meat should ideally be stored in an extra container to catch any drips or spills into the crisper drawers.



### DOOR:

The door is the warmest part because you're always opening and closing it. Keep condiments that have a lot of preservatives, salt or sugar here to keep them safe. Do not put milk or eggs there.



**Abbey Sharp**, is a Registered Dietician with a BAsc in Nutrition and Food, Dieticians of Canada accreditation and received her culinary training from George Brown College. Currently, Abbey is an avid food writer, blogger, TV and radio personality and the founder of Abbey's Kitchen Inc.

<http://www.abbeyskitchen.com/about/>