# Understanding the Shelf Life of Chicken and Other Proteins in the Fridge



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Raw and cooked chicken are staples in many kitchens, but knowing how long they last in the fridge is crucial for food safety. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and food safety experts, here are some guidelines for storing chicken and other proteins:

**Cooked Chicken**: It remains safe for consumption for 3 to 4 days when stored in the refrigerator. For better flavor preservation, cooked meats should be sealed tightly and consumed swiftly, as oxidation can affect taste.

**Raw Chicken**: Whether whole, in pieces, or ground, raw chicken should be cooked within 1 to 2 days after purchase. It is recommended to store raw chicken in a leakproof plastic bag to prevent contamination and to avoid washing it to curb the spread of bacteria.

**Ground Beef**: Similar to raw chicken, raw ground beef should also be used within 1 to 2 days due to the risk of surface bacteria spreading during the grinding process. Cooked ground beef, on the other hand, lasts 3 to 4 days.

**Uncooked Bacon**: The curing process of bacon provides extra preservation time. Uncooked bacon can be stored in the fridge for up to 1 week. However, adhering to the use-by dates is advisable.

**Cooked Salmon**: Once cooked, salmon can last up to 4 days in the refrigerator. Raw salmon should be consumed within 1 to 2 days due to its cold water enzymes that remain active even in refrigerated conditions.

**Cooked Shrimp**: Cooked shrimp can be stored for 3 to 4 days. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggests storing shrimp only after cooking for better preservation.

These guidelines highlight the importance of storing meats at 40°F or cooler, avoiding prolonged exposure at room temperature, and preventing cross-contamination to ensure food safety.