



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NO MORE “MYSTERY MEAT”! RIVAL® SEAL-A-MEAL® OFFERS 10 TIPS FOR KEEPING FOOD FRESHER AND SAFER LONGER IN THE FRIDGE OR FREEZER

Milford, Mass. (September 1, 2005) – September is National Food Safety Education Month^{®*} and a good time to think about food safety at home. Taking precautions during cooking and clean-up are very important, but it’s also important to store food properly. Often, food-related illness strikes when food is stored improperly, whether the food is leftover or fresh from the store.

“Air is food’s biggest enemy when it comes to safety and freshness. When storing food, an airtight seal helps prevent the growth of certain bacteria that can cause food to spoil or get moldy, while at the same time helping preserve freshness and nutritional value,” said Martin Starr, PhD, science advisor to Rival[®] Seal-a-Meal[®]. “The Seal-a-Meal[®] system allows you to remove the air from bags and canisters to create an airtight seal when storing food at home, making it an ideal way to keep food fresher and safer longer. In fact, using a vacuum sealer helps keep food fresher up to five times longer than traditional wraps and bags, and can help maintain the taste and nutritional value of stored food.”

Following are 10 tips for safer food storage:

1. What’s for dinner? 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 for safe long-term storage. And remember to always check the expiration date to ensure the product is still fresh before freezing.
2. No more mystery meat! Label and date foods as you store them so you can easily reference what you have stored and how long foods have been in the fridge or freezer.
3. Chill out. Never let food thaw at room temperature - put it in the refrigerator or in cold water instead. Allow approximately one day for every 5 pounds of frozen fish, meat or poultry you need to thaw.
4. Get the air out. Use a vacuum food sealer, such as the Seal-a-Meal[®] system. An air tight seal helps prevent the growth of certain bacteria that can cause food to spoil or get moldy, while at the same time helping preserve freshness and nutritional value.

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5. Are you going to eat that? Freezer burn happens when air surrounds food and causes the release of moisture. Food with freezer burn may be safe to eat but has lost much of its nutritional value, flavor and texture. The best way to avoid moisture and freezer burn is with an air tight seal.
6. Eyes bigger than your stomach? Store food in convenient portion sizes. This helps the waistline and is also a great way to ensure foods safely cool down for storage and re-heat for eating in the shortest amount of time.
7. Stay cool. The refrigerator should be no higher than 40 degrees and the freezer should always be below 0 degrees.
8. Hot and steamy! As a rule of thumb when reheating leftovers or make-ahead meals, heat them to 175 degrees throughout for 15 seconds.
9. Do you want a doggy bag? Promptly refrigerate leftovers. Perishable cooked foods should not stay at room temperature longer than two hours.
10. Blanch, blanch baby. Certain fresh vegetables should be blanched before they are stored. Blanching cleans off dirt and organisms that could cause the food to lose its flavor and texture.

Seal-a-Meal® has a new line of vacuum food sealers and accessories available in stores now. The new Seal-a-Meal® product line includes the first cordless vacuum food sealer available, as well as a Soft Seal™ Variable Vacuum Control feature for sealing delicate foods such as bagels, cookies and muffins. Seal-a-Meal® also offers a space-saving compact vacuum food sealer ideal for conserving valuable counter space.

More information on vacuum sealing stored foods is available at www.seal-a-meal.com. The new family of Seal-a-Meal® Vacuum Food Sealers and accessories is now available at major retailers.

*Created by the National Restaurant Association Educational Foundation's (NRAEF) International Food Safety Council.

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