

# Storing Food Safely

## Cool, Dark & Dry

Deterioration of food is accelerated whenever the environment is not cool, dark and dry.

Most food contains microscopic amounts of bacteria and mold spores, and on occasion some food may contain insect eggs. Given the right environment, these microorganisms will start to grow and destroy the food. This deterioration process is accelerated by moisture and heat.

If food products are not properly packaged when stored, they can absorb moisture out of the air. When the moisture reaches a level of 12% to 18%, product breakdown will accelerate. This is especially a problem in high humidity areas.

Do not store containers containing food or water directly on concrete floors. Store on shelves or insert a piece of plywood between container and concrete.

Heat is also a major cause of deterioration in food quality. Store all food products away from sunlight, furnaces, heat ducts, clothes dryers, chimneys, fireplaces/stoves and other sources of heat.