

Food Storage Life: 30 Years!

Research by Brigham Young University professors in 2008 indicates that when canned and stored properly, **estimated shelf life for many products has increased to 30 years or more!** These include:

Powdered milk	20 years	Wheat	30+ years
Apple slices	30 years	White rice	30+ years
Macaroni	30 years	Sugar	30+ years
Pinto beans	30 years	Salt	30+ years
Potato flakes	30 years	Baking soda	30+ years
Rolled oats	30 years	Vitamin C tablets	30+ years
Corn	30+ years		

All samples tested at BYU were packaged in #10 cans with low oxygen levels and had been stored at room temperature or below. Properly packaged, low-moisture foods stored at room temperature or cooler (75°F/24°C or lower) remain nutritious and edible much longer than previously thought.

Food must be packaged and stored properly. The acronym "**HALT**" is one way to remember four things that will prolong the shelf-life of dry food: Minimize their exposure to Humidity, Air, Light and Temperature. Foods stored at higher temperatures, such as in garages or attics, have a much shorter shelf life. If storage temperatures are higher, rotate products as needed to maintain quality. Fats and oils, such as vegetable oil and shortening, need more frequent rotation (such as vegetable oil every 1 to 2 years).

Recommended containers for longer-term storage include # 10 cans, foil pouches, and PETE bottles (for dry products such as wheat, corn, and beans). These containers, used with oxygen absorber packets, eliminate food-borne insects and help preserve nutritional quality and taste.

You can use plastic buckets for longer-term storage of wheat, dry beans, and other dry products. (We put 3" of grain in the bottom of a 5-gallon bucket, added a half-cup-sized piece of dry ice, covered it with grain to $\frac{3}{4}$ " from the top, left the cover ajar until the dry ice sublimed away, then snapped the cover on.)

If moist products are stored in packaging that reduces oxygen, botulism poisoning may result. When stored in airtight containers with oxygen absorbers, products must be dry (about 10% or less moisture content).