

BERKEL VACUUM SEALERS

VACUUM & SHELF LIFE GUIDELINES

VACUUM PACKAGING

In a Few Steps for an Optimal Seal

Step One

Insert the product into the pouch.

Step Two

Insert the bag into the vacuum sealer chamber and place it on the sealing bar. Leave a minimum of 1 extra inch (1") from the seal bar to the top of the bag. Ensure the upper and lower parts of the bag opening are as aligned as possible. Ensure your product is as straight as possible relatively to the seal bar.

Step Three

Select your vacuum settings.

Step Four

Close the lid. Press down until it's held by the vacuum.

Step Five

The lid opens automatically once the cycle is complete.



RECOMMENDATIONS

To Get the Best Results

Bags

Choose the appropriate bag size to reduce your costs, over-packaging and to offer an attractive presentation.

Avoid contaminating the sealing area of the package or clean it, if necessary, before vacuuming. This will prevent seal quality problems, which could be the cause of slow leaks, bubbles, non-symmetrical lines or holes.

Vacuum Packaging

Ideally, products should be cold or at room temperature.

After the vacuum cycle, check to see if the product is completely tightened in the bag. If not, there may be a leak (sealing area or damaged bag) or the vacuum percentage is too low. The more you reduce the amount of air in the pouch, the longer your products will last.

For sensitive products (i.e. fresh sausages or pastries), we recommend setting a lower vacuum % to avoid crushing them.

You can determine that the seal is of good quality when it's clear, without chimneys, and cannot be torn.

AVERAGE SHELF LIFE

Of Vacuum-Sealed Products

Food	Storage in the refrigerator		Storage in freezer	
	Normal	Vacuum sealed between 35°F and 40°F (1°C and 4°C)	Standard container or bag	Vacuum packaging
Beef & veal	2-4 days	5-8 days	10-12 months	2-3 years
Ground meat	1-2 days	5-8 days	2-3 months	
Pork	2-4 days	10-14 days	8-12 months	
Fresh poultry	2-3 days	10-14 days	1 year	
Smoked meats	1-3 days	3-8 months	2-3 months	
Deli sliced meat	1-4 days	3-8 months	1-3 months	
Fresh fish	3-4 days	4-6 days	2-6 months	
Smoked fish	1-2 weeks	1-3 weeks	2 months	
Seafood	1-2 days	4-6 days	2-4 months	
Green vegetables	3-14 days	1-4 weeks	10-12 months	
Hard cheese	2-5 weeks	6-12 weeks	2-3 months	
Pizza	2-7 days	1-3 weeks	3-4 months	

Health Canada, (2017, July 05) <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/general-food-safety-tips/safe-food-storage.html>
Airborne products (n.d.), https://microsites.airproducts.com/com/map_selector/results/Raw_Red_Meat.htm

Note that all vacuum-sealed foods must be of high quality, fresh and prepared in a sanitary manner to achieve optimal shelf life. In addition, shelf life can be affected by product freshness, acidity, pH level, temperature, ingredients and the type of bag used, which explains the width of some intervals. Modified atmosphere packaging (MAP) will help achieve the highest interval point. The freezer shelf life indication is relative to quality. Vacuum sealing is not a substitute for canning. Perishable foods must be refrigerated. The above recommendations are for guidance only; please refer to your food health agency to obtain the required certifications for retail sale.

VACUUM PERCENTAGE

by Food Type

	Meat	Fish & seafood	Cheese	Vegetables	Soups, sauces, liquids over 176°F (80°C)	Soups, sauces, liquids over 104°F (40°C)	Soups, sauces, liquids at room temperature
Vacuum level (%)	99.5	97	94-99	70-85	50	93	96
Vacuum plus (seconds)	5	0	5	0	0	0	0

When packaging liquid products, the vacuum lowers the boiling point, which results in the creation of bubbles in the pouch. If your vacuum packaging machine has a transparent lid, you can see this process. A good vacuum setting prevents the liquid from boiling.

