

2021 Sports Nutrition Advisory Panel Round Up: Tips to Decrease Food Waste

Did you know that about 40 percent of food goes uneaten in the U.S. each year? In a typical week, an average American family of four purchases 96 pounds of food, and of that, 22 pounds (about 23 percent) goes to waste.¹ That is like buying four bags of groceries and tossing one in the trash. To be more sustainable in the kitchen, we asked our 2021 Sports Nutrition Advisory Panel for their tips and tricks on how they help to reduce food waste in their everyday lives. Here's what they had to say:



Start with meal planning

On the weekend, plan your meals for the week ahead based around the ingredients you already have in your refrigerator, freezer or pantry. – **Jake Sankal, M.Ed., RD, CSSD, RSCC*D**



Plan to have a day or two of leftovers during the week. Depending on how much of each meal you plan to cook, this will not only save you time, but it will prevent you from overbuying. – **Nici Mense, MS, RD**



Go to the store prepared with a list and include the amounts of each food item you need; never “wing it”. Keep a running list on your smartphone of all the ingredients you’ll need for the week. – **Steve Smith, RD, CSSD, LD**

If it is difficult to buy fresh fruits and/or vegetables in the right amount so you can eat them all before they spoil, then just buy frozen so you can use what you want, when you want it.

– **Heidi Skolnik, MS, CDN, FASCM**



Cook once and make one or two other recipes with it. A favorite in our house is crock-pot chicken for tacos or burrito bowls. And we make enough to have it as a filling for enchiladas for another meal, too. Sometimes we even freeze the enchiladas for later in the month. It's so nice to just pull it out of the freezer and have a delicious dinner, ready to heat up in no time. – **Angie Dye, MS, RD, CSSD, LD**

Shop at home before you roam — look at the #wealthonyourshelf. Become a food storage pro so you know before you throw! Give your leftovers new life: repurpose or renew in a smoothie, a stir fry, a sauce or a soup with great taste and no waste. – **Leslie Bonci, MPH, RD, CSSD, LDN**



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Make the most of leftovers

Repurpose foods by making a new dish with leftover vegetables. For example, you can use them in soups, stews, omelets, quiches, sandwiches or wraps, and even a DIY veggie pizza. – **Felicia D. Stoler, DCN, MS, RDN, FACSM, FAND**



Use milk that's about to reach its expiration date to make a quick breakfast like warm oatmeal or a cool, refreshing smoothie, or stir it into mashed potatoes for an easy side dish with dinner.

– **Heather Mangieri, MS, RD, CSSD**

When making sauces or marinades for a meal, pour the extra into ice cube trays. Next time you want the sauce or marinade, pull out as many frozen cubes as you need for your meal. It's a quick and easy way to have a homemade sauce or marinade on hand for a later date without having to do all the prep work.

– **Stephanie Coppola, MS, RDN, LDN**

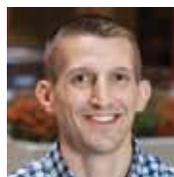


Find creative ways to use all parts of the food you buy. Did you know you can actually use the watermelon rind? Try pickling it in some vinegar! And if you are a fan of beets (which may help improve endurance exercise!), keep the leaves and sauté them with garlic and olive oil!

– **Jessica Garay, PhD, RDN, FAND, CSCS**

Master food storage

Keep your refrigerator and freezer clean and organized and store leftovers in clear or glass containers. This makes it easier to see what foods you have so they don't get "lost" or forgotten. – **Matt Darnell, PhD, RD, CSSD, SCCC**



Understand "Best By" Dates. There is a lot of confusion over dates on food packaging. For a majority of foods, "best if used by" dates are simply recommendations for optimal quality, not an indication that the product isn't good anymore. **Here** is a quick read from the FDA with more tips on navigating date labels.

– **Molly Morgan, RD, CDC, CSSD**

Package up and store leftovers from meals in a way that is quick and easy to re-heat. Package leftovers in single portion containers to make a quick lunch or dinner for the next day or two. Use freezer-friendly containers so they can be easily transferred to the freezer if you don't eat them in the three to four days post-cooking.

– **Stevie Lyn Smith, MS, RDN, CSSD, CDN**

Get familiar with the shelf life of foods. The **Foodkeeper** app is a great resource. This can be a helpful guide to show you when food items could be moved to the freezer for longer storage.

– **Sarah Snyder, MS, RD, CSSD, LD, CSCS**



Donate extra food to those in need in your community

Sharing unwanted food is an opportunity to improve the environment and connect with others. Consider offering prepped meals, sandwiches and food items as a way to care for your local community.



– **Dan Liburd, MS, CSCS, USAW**

I like to freeze the extra portions of my meals or share the extra servings with friends and neighbors. I will also split up



food items that I purchase at big box stores and portion them out appropriately, so nothing goes to waste.

– **Sue James, MS, RD, LDN**

Did you know that the dairy community works hard to recover valuable nutrients to feed the hungry and transform food waste into natural fertilizer and renewable energy?²²

*Reducing food waste helps the planet by keeping food out of landfills and conserving valuable resources. A family of four that buys and eats just what they need could reduce its annual carbon footprint by 4,587 pounds! Here are two additional resources, **Food Waste and Honor the Harvest**. Do your part and try some of these simple tips to help reduce food waste.*

References:

1. <https://www.americandairy.com/core/fileparse.php/299/urlt/NDC-Honor-The-Harvest.PDF>
2. <https://www.americandairy.com/core/fileparse.php/299/urlt/NDC-What-a-Waste-infographic-.pdf>



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