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### **Question: I bought a large ham at a great price but it is more than we need, can I freeze half?**

Answer: The quick answer is yes you can freeze the extra ham. However, the texture and the taste may be affected by the process of freezing and defrosting. An uncooked ham could be divided and part of it frozen to cook at another time. A piece of cooked ham, frozen and then defrosted, may look and feel spongy and a little slick. Wiping off the moisture with a paper towel before using it will help. It may not be ideal for sandwiches and is better suited to being used in cooked dishes, such as soups or casseroles. For convenience, cut cooked ham into bite-size pieces before freezing.

The recommended time for keeping ham frozen depends on whether it is cooked or uncooked, cured or not:

Uncured, uncooked ham for up to 6 months.

Cured, uncooked ham for up to 4 months.

Cured, cooked ham for up to 2 months.

Before freezing, it is important to wrap the ham as well as possible, squeezing out all the air and placing it in a freezer container or bag. Vacuum packing is ideal. Freezer burn occurs when food is damaged by dehydration. This occurs when the water molecules in food are allowed to escape due to poor packaging. Although freezer burn will affect the look and taste, the food is safe to eat. If there is a small amount of freezer burn, simply trim it off before cooking. Large amounts of freezer burn can make a food unpalatable and we do not recommend eating it.

Unopened vacuum-packed ham purchased from the grocery store does have a longer refrigerator life so check the best-before date as the ham may be able to be kept in the refrigerator sealed until you plan to use it.

We Can Help! is a weekly column from ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen. Do you have a cooking or household question you'd like the ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen Answer Line to help you with? Call us toll-free at 1-877-420-9090 Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., or send us an email at [bfkanswerline@atcogas.com](mailto:bfkanswerline@atcogas.com). For our searchable database of kitchen-tested recipes, along with household tips and expert advice, visit our website at [www.atcoblueflamekitchen.com](http://www.atcoblueflamekitchen.com)