

## **Food Safety and Emu Meat**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **How is emu meat sold?**

Emu meat is usually vacuum-packed and sold fresh or frozen.

#### **Why is the meat so dark?**

Emu is an iron rich meat that is naturally a dark cherry red.

#### **How long can I keep fresh emu meat in the refrigerator?**

Vacuum-packed fresh emu steaks and roasts can be kept in the refrigerator 4 to 6 days; similarly sealed ground emu will keep in the refrigerator for 1 to 3 days. Fresh emu meat kept longer than this should be frozen.

#### **What length of time can I keep emu in the freezer?**

Generally, vacuum-packed or well-wrapped ground emu will keep well in the freezer for 6 months. Similarly packaged steaks or roasts will keep for up to a year.

#### **If I purchase fresh emu that is not vacuum-packed, how do I properly wrap it for the freezer?**

Follow these steps:

- Use freezer wrap materials such as specially coated freezer paper (place the waxed side against the meat); heavy-duty aluminum foil; heavy-duty polyethylene film; heavy-duty food grade plastic bags.
- Re-wrap the emu meat in convenient portions: leave roasts whole but place steaks in meal-size packages. If ground emu has been bought in bulk, repackage in one-pound packages or pre-shaped patties. Put a double layer of waxed paper between steaks and patties.
- Wrap the meat tightly, pressing as much air out of the package as possible.
- Label with the name of the cut and date.
- Freeze at 0 degrees F or lower.

#### **What about storing or freezing leftovers?**

Leftover meat should be placed in the refrigerator within 1 to 2 hours of serving and can be stored in the coldest part of the refrigerator for up to 2 days. Well-wrapped leftovers can be kept in the freezer for up to 3 months.

#### **Is it safe to eat leftover food that was left out on the counter to cool, then forgotten for a few hours?**

No, if food has been left in temperatures over 40° F for more than 2 hours, it should be discarded. Pathogenic bacteria will not usually affect the taste, smell, or appearance of a food.