

Ask the Expert:

What should I know about food allergies?

Written by Thaisa Moro Cantu-Jungles, Visiting PhD Student

Food allergy awareness is very important for promoting safe access to food for clients and their families. Each year as many as 150 Americans die due to food allergens and thousands more experience severe allergic reactions. Emergency food providers are a key resource that may link clients with information to enhance awareness of food allergens.

Food allergy symptoms typically appear from within a few minutes to two hours after eating the food containing the allergen. Minor symptoms may include itchy throat, rash or headache. More severe reactions may include obstructive swelling of the lips, tongue, and/or throat, trouble swallowing, shortness of breath, drop in blood pressure (feeling faint, confused, weak), loss of consciousness, chest pain, a weak pulse and a sense of "impending doom." These symptoms may be signs of anaphylaxis

(a potentially life-threatening reaction) and require immediate treatment. Persons with a known food allergy may wear a medical bracelet and carry two auto-injections with epinephrine, which aid in stopping the reaction. An individual experiencing anaphylaxis should seek immediate medical attention, and call 911 even after the individual receives the epinephrine shot.

The best way to prevent food related allergic reactions is to strictly avoid foods or allergens that trigger the reaction. Eight "major food allergens", account for 90% of all food reactions, and are: milk*, eggs*, peanuts*, tree nuts*, soy*, wheat*, fish and shellfish. The law requires that food labels show that a "major food allergen" or any ingredient that contains protein from a major food allergen is added as an ingredient to the product. This notification can be shown in parentheses after the ingredient (e.g. albumin (egg)) or at

the end of the ingredient list, often bolded (e.g. **Contains: milk and soy**). Carefully reading ingredient labels on food packaging, and advising clients about the presence of allergens can help prevent life-threatening allergic reactions.

*common food allergens in children



Sources: <http://www.foodallergy.org/home>; <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/foodallergy.html>; <http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm079311.htm>. Photo: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/tamburix/95936658/>

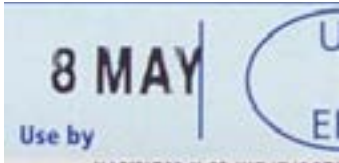

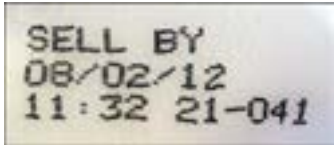

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Food Safety: Date Labeling Explained

Written by Kiara McIntosh, Undergraduate Student in Department of Food Science

The misinterpretation of date labels is a leading factor of food waste in America. Food labeling dates are provided for safety, quality, or retailing purposes. “Sell-by”, “best before” and “use-by” dates are more commonly known, but there are several different types of date labels found on food products. Understanding what the dates on each label mean is an important way to prevent food borne illness and food waste.

	<p>An expiration date or “use-by” date is provided for food safety purposes. Products that are consumed after the expiration date may have reduced quality or compromised safety. Items may appear to be fine, but it is best to discard them after the expiration date because they may contain harmful pathogens. Freezing products before the expiration date is another way to lengthen the shelf life.</p>
	<p>“Best-by (before)” labels indicate product quality for items with a long shelf life. When these products are handled properly, these “best-by” dates give a good estimate of how long an unopened item will retain its best quality. Products may still be safe to eat after the labeled date, but their intended smell, taste, and texture may be compromised.</p>
	<p>“Sell-by” and “packed on” dates are for retailers. They inform the length of time retailers can display the products for sale. Most of these products are good for at least 1 week post-“sell-by” date if kept at the proper temperature.</p>
	<p>Lastly, there are closed and coded dates. These labels are mostly found on canned goods and are used to track inventory. These dates are not meant for consumers use unless a recall has been issued.</p>

Food can go bad before the labeled expiration date if it is not handled properly. Check for unusual color, texture, and odor to determine if a product is food safe. Do not taste a product if the food or parts of it appear or smell unusual. Do not consume any products that seem questionable or have damaged packages.

For food handling guidelines to retain the safety and quality of your product, visit <https://www.purdue.edu/indianasefrnetwork/resources/foodsafety.aspx>.

Sources: Brown, S. (n.d.) Dates on Food Packages: What Do They Mean?; Food Safety and Inspection Service. (March 2015) Food Product Dating. Retrieved from <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating>; Gravely, M. (June 2013). Before You Toss Food, Wait. Check It Out! Retrieved from <http://blogs.usda.gov/2013/06/27/before-you-toss-food-wait-check-it-out/>; National Sanitation Foundation. Retrieved from <http://www.nsf.org/consumer-resources/health-and-safety-tips/food-safety-shopping-storage-tips/understanding-expiration-dates>; Natural Resource and Defense Council. (September 2013). The Dating Game: How Confusing Food Date Labels Lead to Food Waste in America. Retrieved from <http://blogs.law.harvard.edu/foodpolicyinitiative/files/2013/09/dating-game-report.pdf>; Purdue University. Retrieved from <https://www.purdue.edu/indianasefrnetwork/resources/Whenindoubtthrowitout.html>

Written by Sasha Harrison, Purdue Nutrition Department Alumna

Vegetables contain essential vitamins, minerals and antioxidants. The color of a vegetable can be used as an indicator of the nutrients contained in the food. Green vegetables are usually rich in iron, magnesium, vitamin B and vitamin C. Yellow and orange vegetables often contain vitamin A, which promotes eye and skin health. Red and other deeply colored vegetables contain antioxidants, which help protect against cancer. White vegetables, such as potatoes, may provide magnesium and potassium. Vegetables are also a good source of fiber, which helps to promote the feeling of fullness.

Purchasing in-season vegetables can save money and provide variety in the diet each season. Canned or frozen vegetables are also healthy options.

Incorporate vegetables into your diet by:

- Cutting up celery or carrots into snack size pieces for “on-the-go” snacks
Pair these with a protein packed dip (like peanut butter or hummus) for a quick and easy way to satisfy hunger.
- Adding vegetables to existing meals by grating vegetables like squash, zucchini and carrots into pasta sauces
- Chopping up additional seasonal vegetables or adding canned or frozen vegetables to soups and casseroles
- Adding veggies to pizzas and sandwiches
- Including vegetables as side dish with a meal
- Sautéing a mix of vegetables with a little vegetable oil and seasoning
- Roasting vegetables in vegetable oil for 15-25 minutes

Below are two recipes to try! Vegetables are versatile and easy. Make it your own by using what you have at home!

Sources: <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/>; <http://choosemyplate.gov/food-groups/vegetables-why.html>; <http://extension.missouri.edu/explorepdf/miscpubs/mx0962.pdf> <http://www.apre.org/science/apre-blog/post/eat-your-white-vegetables/>

Sesame Garlic Vegetable Medley

Ingredients (2 servings)

- 3 cups assorted vegetables (broccoli, cauliflower, summer squash, sliced carrots sticks)
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic or garlic paste
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 1/4 teaspoon sesame oil
- 2 Tablespoons minced parsley
- 2 Tablespoons minced white onion

Directions

1. Cut vegetables into 1 inch cubes. In a small bowl, whisk together lemon juice, garlic, olive oil and sesame oil.
2. Place vegetables, onion and the lemon juice mixture in a microwave safe bowl with a damp paper towel covering the top.
3. Microwave on High power for 3-1/2 minutes or until tender. Let stand 1 minute before opening.

Sesame Garlic Vegetable Medley

Per serving: 70 Calories, 3g Total Fat, 0.5g Total Saturated Fat, 0mg Cholesterol, 266mg Sodium, 9g Total Carbohydrate, 3g Total Sugars, 5g Total Dietary Fiber, 4g Total Protein

Broccoli Salad with low-fat mayonnaise

Per serving: 167 Calories, 8g Total Fat, 2g Total Saturated Fat, 12mg Cholesterol, 309mg Sodium, 22g Total Carbohydrate, 15.5g Total Sugars, 1g Total Dietary Fiber, 4g Total Protein

Broccoli Salad with plain yogurt

Per serving: 151 Calories, 4g Total Fat, 1g Total Saturated Fat, 10mg Cholesterol, 170mg Sodium, 25g Total Carbohydrate, 17g Total Sugars, 3g Total Dietary Fiber, 8g Total Protein

Broccoli Salad

Ingredients (8 servings)

- 6 cups broccoli, chopped
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 red onion (medium, peeled and diced)
- 2 Tablespoons white sugar
- 8 bacon slices (cooked and crumbled, optional)
- 2 Tablespoons lemon juice
- 3/4 cup low-fat mayonnaise or plain yogurt

Directions

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium bowl.
2. Mix well.
3. Chill for 1 to 2 hours.
4. Serve.



Underlining denotes a TEFAP commodity food ingredient

Recipe source (right): <http://www.whatscooking.fns.usda.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/broccoli-salad>

Recipe source (left): <http://www.fruitsandveggiesmorematters.org/main-recipes?catrec=10&com=2&recid=173>



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This newsletter is edited by Sarah Crulcich, Briana Eicher, RD, CD and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

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IN THE NEWS

Don't forget to register for the IEFRN webinar!

Written by Briana Eicher, RD, CD

The IEFRN webinar is quickly approaching! On June 19th, from 1:00-2:00pm, join us to learn about the full benefits of the IEFRN website that are available to emergency food providers. Register for the webinar (required) at: <http://bit.ly/IceYGDU>, code: 645 521 513 .

Are you an emergency food provider? Do you work with emergency food providers in your organization? Do you serve low-income or food insecure populations? Then you are encouraged to attend! Those who are encouraged to attend are Indiana emergency food providers and the volunteers of those programs, as well as related programs. Examples include food pantries, soup kitchens, shelters and other providers of emergency food, CSFP sites, congregate meal sites, summer feeding sites, programs that provide vouchers, action agencies, WIC offices, DFR offices, Purdue Extension, and other similar organizations.

WHAT: Want to help get the word out about your emergency food services? Learn about IEFRN's free directory service and how to use our website to promote your organization.

WHERE: Please go to the following link to register (required): <http://bit.ly/IceYGDU>

WHEN: June 19th, 1:00-2:00pm

WHY: To help Indiana emergency food providers, community agencies, and partners better utilize IEFRN's free resources!