



Food Storage Guide

Food Product Dating

Date labels are common on many types of food packages. Use the information below to help you decide which outdated foods to distribute and which to discard.

Types of Dates

Expiration Dates or "Use By"

This is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. The manufacturer determines this date. Do not use or give our products after their expiration date. Some products such as yeast and baking soda may not work after this date.

- Examples: "Expires 2/15/07" or "Do not use after 7/9/07"
- Items with this type of date: infant formula, vitamins, yeast and baking powder

Pull By Dates or "Sell By"

This date informs a store how long to display the product for sale. The product should be purchased before this date. If a food has been refrigerated at the proper temperature, it may still be safe to eat or drink after this date. Do not use it if it smells bad or the seal has been broken.

- Example: "Sell by May 16"
- Items with this type of date: refrigerated foods such as milk, yogurt, cottage cheese, cream, eggs, lunch meat, and packaged salad mixes.

Quality Dates or "Best if Used By (or Before)"

This date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date. A food is typically still safe to eat but it is best to contact the manufacturer if you are uncertain. However, do not use or distribute baby food past this date.

- Example: "Better if used by May 16"
- Items with this type of date: canned or dried foods such as packaged mixes, cold cereals, peanut butter, and baby food.



HOW LONG CAN I KEEP IT ON MY SHELF?

Item	Storage	Handling Hints
<u>Cereals</u> Ready-to-eat, unopened Hot cereal (dry)	6-12 months 6 months	Check date on package
<u>Coffee</u> Cans, unopened Instant, unopened	2 years 1-2 years	Can be frozen to extend shelf life
<u>Flour</u> White or whole wheat	6-8 months	Can be frozen for indefinite storage
<u>Milk</u> Evaporated, unopened Nonfat dry, unopened	12 months 6 months	Keep cool and dry
<u>Pasta</u> Spaghetti, macaroni, etc. Egg noodles	2 years 6 months	Once opened, store in airtight container
<u>Rice</u> White Brown, wild	2 years 6-12 months	Keep tightly covered
<u>Sugar</u> Brown Granulated Artificial sweeteners	4 months 2 years 2 years	Store in airtight containers
Dried Fruit	6 months	Keep cool
<u>Canned Food:</u> Canned Foods Canned Fruit Juices	12 months 9 months	Keep cool