

Know Your Food Dates

For best quality, try to eat the foods you buy **before** the date on the package. After that date, most foods are safe to eat if they have been handled safely. Don't let good food go to waste!

Common Phrases

What does it mean?

Safe to eat after the date?

Use-By:

Last day the food should be eaten for best quality. This date is determined by the manufacturer

Yes, except for infant formula and washed, cut & packaged produce. Most other foods are safe.

Exp (Expiration):

Last day a food should be eaten for quality or nutritious reasons.

Yes, except formula and washed, cut & packaged produce. Eggs can be used up to 30 days **AFTER** the date.

Sell-By:

How long the food should stay on store shelves for best quality. Determined by the manufacturer.

Yes, except for infant formula & washed, cut and packaged produce. Foods nearing the date may be discounted for quick sale.

Best if used by/before:

The last day to eat the food for peak quality and flavor. Not an indication of safety.

Yes, except for infant formula and washed, cut & packaged produce. Most other foods are safe.

Remember, throw out all prepackaged, washed & cut produce and infant formula after the date has passed no matter what type of date is used.

Sources

Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA. Food Product Dating. <http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/food-safety-education/get-answers/food-safety-fact-sheets/food-labeling/food-product-dating/food-product-dating>. Accessed 04/2020.
Egg Safety Center. How long are eggs safe to eat after purchasing? <https://eggsafety.org/> Accessed 4/2020