

Understanding Food Product Dating:

- **Packing or Manufacturing Date** – used by manufacturers for tracking and recalls, not an expiration date
- **Sell By Date** – this is a quality date, it tells the stores how long to display the product for sale, the product is still safe to eat past this date
- **Best By or Best If Used By Date** – this is a quality date, it tells clients the date by which the product should be eaten for best flavor or quality, the product is still safe to eat past this date
- **Use By or Expiration Date** – this is the last date recommended for the product while at peak quality, the product is still safe to eat past this date

Food Guide to Food Quality and Safe Handling:

The following will tell you some items and how long they last on the shelf, in the fridge, or frozen past the date.

Milk – 1 week fridge, 3 months frozen

Yogurt – 7-14 days fridge, 1-2 months frozen

Eggs – 3-5 weeks fridge, do not freeze

Beef, pork – 3-4 days fridge, 4-12 months frozen

Ground meat – 1-2 days fridge, 3-4 months frozen

Chicken, turkey – 1-2 days fridge, 9-12 months frozen

Baby food – do not use past date

Canned meat, poultry, green beans, carrots, corn, pasta, peas, potatoes, spinach – 2-5 years shelf stable

Canned fruit, pickles, sauerkraut, tomato soup – 12-18 months shelf stable

Pancake mix – 15 months shelf stable

Cake, brownie, bread mixes – 12-18 months shelf stable

Frosting – 10 months shelf stable

Ketchup, mustard, barbeque sauce, olives, salsa, salad dressings – 12 months shelf stable

Cookies – 2 months shelf stable, 8-12 months frozen

Crackers – 8 months shelf stable, 3-4 months fridge or frozen

Juice boxes – 4-6 months shelf stable

Rice and Dried Pasta – 2 years shelf stable

Bread – 2-4 days shelf stable, 7-14 days fridge, 3 months frozen

Doughnuts – 1-2 days shelf stable, 1 week fridge, 1 month frozen