

Food Code Guidelines

This table provides guidance on how to use the dates on food packaging. Use your best judgment and senses of sight, smell, feel, and taste to determine if the food is edible. However, remember that many foodborne pathogens cannot be seen, tasted, or smelled. When in doubt, throw it out!

Product



Guideline - Quality

Can be consumed 12 to 18 months after date on package	Can be consumed 2 to 5 years after date on package	Can be consumed 1 to 2 years after date on package	If frozen by "best by" date, it is safe indefinitely. Once thawed, use within a week.	*Milk: consume up to 10 days after date. Other dairy: consume up to 1 to 3 weeks after date.	Up to 3 days for highly perishable items and up to 3 months for hardier items.	Can be consumed 3 to 5 weeks after date on package.	Can be consumed 1 to 3 weeks after date on package.
-------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------

Guideline - Physical

Discard if heavily dented, rusting, punctured, or missing label.	Discard if heavily dented, rusting, punctured, or missing label.	Discard if packaging has been compromised.	Discard if packaging is ripped or if product has a rancid/foul odor.	Discard if product has sour/foul odor, looks chunky, or off-color.	Discard if there are signs of mold or foul odor.	Discard if shells are cracked or broken.	Discard if there are signs of mold.
------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Baby formula/food and over-the-counter medications should not be consumed past their expiration date.