

## What you need to know about food dates

*There are NO uniform or universally accepted descriptions used on food labels for open dating in the U.S. As a result, there are a wide variety of phrases used on labels to describe quality dates.*

According to the USDA, any food stored at exactly 0°F is safe to eat indefinitely.

### *\*Best if Used-By and Use-By date:*

“Use-By” or: Best if Used By” dates are a suggestion for when the food item will be at its best quality. Food is generally safe if consumed past this date, but may have deteriorated in flavor, texture, or appearance. “Use-By” dates are most often found on canned goods, dry goods, condiments, or other shelf stable items. “Use-by” is not a safety date EXCEPT when used on infant formula. Consumption by this date ensures the formula contains not less than the quantity of each nutrient as described on the label.



### *\*Sell-By date:*

Many fresh or prepared foods are labeled with a “Sell-By” date as a guide for how long the item should be displayed for sale before quality deteriorates. Items are generally safe for consumption after this date but may begin to lose flavor or eye appeal. “Sell-By” dates are chosen with the assumption that the buyer may store

or eat the item a few days after purchase. To be sure your food is fresh and will keep at home, it is best not to buy items that are past their “sell by” date.

### *\*Guaranteed Fresh*

This date is often used for perishable baked goods. Beyond this date, freshness is no longer guaranteed, although it may still be edible.



*According to the US Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service:*

- Milk is good for about a week after the “sell by” date
- Eggs can keep for three to five weeks beyond the “sell by” date



