

MORE MEALS



LESS WASTE

Decoding Date Codes

You can help prevent food waste — simply by checking the date codes printed on food items. Look for them when shopping at the grocery store — and before using or eating any item at home. Date codes can tell you if something is still good to eat and how long you have before an item goes bad. So you can plan ahead and make sure food does not go to waste.

Not sure what a code means? Check out the explanations below.

EXPIRES 11/15/18
DO NOT USE AFTER 11/15/18

EXPIRATION DATE

FOUND ON items such as baby food, baby formula, medicines, vitamins, yeast and baking powder.

WHAT IT MEANS: An expiration date is when a food item is expected to go bad or stop working as promised. You should **NOT** distribute or use anything after its expiration date! (Yeast and baking powder are exceptions — they are safe to eat/use after their expiration dates. They just won't work as well.)

Packed on 03/01/20
22:5306412
KL064

PACK DATE

FOUND ON items such as canned foods, crackers, cookies and spices.

WHAT IT MEANS: The pack date indicates when the food was packaged, often displayed in a code using a variety of numbers. Usually food is of good quality and safe to eat for a long time past its pack date.

SELL BY DATE
January 1, 2018
Full Date

SELL BY

FOUND ON refrigerated foods such as milk, yogurt, eggs and lunch meat.

WHAT IT MEANS: A store must sell a food item before its sell-by date. If the food has been handled properly, it is still safe to eat and the quality is good.

BEST IF USED BY DATE
1/1/2018

USE BY

FOUND ON crackers; cookies; cold cereals and other dry, shelf stable food.

WHAT IT MEANS: The use-by date is the manufacturer's recommendation for how long an item will be at its peak quality. After this date, food is still safe to eat — but it begins to lose nutrients and quality. Items like medicines will begin to lose their strength after the use-by date and may not work as well.

Shelf Life Guide

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