

PRODUCT

WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

DATING

All of those dates on food products – sell by, use by, best if used by – are not an indicator of food safety. So what do they mean?

- **SELL-BY DATE** – This date tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before this date.
- **BEST IF USED BY/BEFORE DATE** – This date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.
- **USE-BY DATE** – This date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. The date has been determined by the maker of the product.
- **CLOSED/CODED DATES** – These dates are packing numbers for use by the manufacturer.

DECIPHERING THE DATES

Product dates don't necessarily mean the product is unsafe to consume.

To learn more about dates on products, visit fsis.usda.gov.

For more information on food waste prevention, visit des.sc.gov/dwfc.



7 TIPS FOR REDUCING FOOD WASTE AT HOME

1 Plan ahead. Create a meal plan based on items you already have at home.

2 Shop smart. Make a list of items you still need and stick to it.

3 Understand the labels. "Sell by," "use by" and "best by" are not expiration dates. Take a smell test to see if items are still good to eat.

4 Prep right. Prep and portion food when you get home from the store.

5 Only cook what you'll eat. Plan accordingly for your family or guests unless you love leftovers.

6 Be creative. Use leftover meals to make new meals.

7 Store correctly. Your fridge should be 40°F and your freezer should be 0°F. Make sure to put the older items up front so they get used first.

LOVE YOUR FOOD!



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