



FOOD SAFETY FAQ

What Does the Date Mean?



Dates on food are NOT for food safety!
The dates below are intended for quality or retailers, NOT whether or not food is safe to eat.

Sell-By Date:

Tells the store how long to display the product for sale.

Used-By Date:

The last date recommended for the product while at peak quality.

Expiration Date:

The last date recommended for the product while at peak quality.

Best-By Date:

Tells customers the date by which the product should be eaten for best flavor or quality.

Where Can I Find More Information?

Ask Karen!

<https://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/informational/askkaren>

or call

Second Harvest Food Bank of North

Central Ohio: 440-960-2265

Donated products at this pantry have been inspected by Second Harvest volunteers and/or pantry staff/volunteers to ensure safe consumption for community members.

*Exceptions include: Baby food, over the counter medication, and vitamins/supplements.

How Long is Food Good For?

Give food a chance before throwing it out or leaving it on the shelf at your local pantry!

Assuming proper storage, all food items* are safe to eat past the date on the product unless you notice signs of spoilage. This includes refrigerated, frozen, and shelf stable foods.

Shelf Stable Foods:

Our typical guideline is 1 year past the expiration date, but some products are good for up to 30 years! Ask your local pantry or contact Second Harvest for specific guidelines.

Refrigerated/Frozen Foods:

It depends! Frozen foods will last longer than refrigerated foods. If the food looks, smells, or otherwise seems spoiled or contaminated, don't eat it! Remember, when in doubt, throw it out!

