

FRESH

Food Recovery Enhanced



Did You Know “Expired“ Food Does Not Mean Unsafe Food?

“Best If Used By”

“Sell By”

Food product labels carry with them various code dates that are intended to convey product freshness or quality components. (8) Contrary to popular belief, the vast majority of “expired” foods do not represent a safety hazard! Except for Infant Formula and Baby Food, code dates represented with “Sell By”, “Use By” or “Best If Used By” labels have no impact on food safety. Infant formula and baby food code dates are strictly enforced under Section 114094.5 of the California Retail Food Code (“Cal Code”). Infant formulas and baby foods are required to contain a specific quantity of certain nutrients as indicated on the label. Once baby foods have been stored for a certain amount of time, the nutritional value decreases and the infant formulas can clump together, blocking the baby bottle nipple. In addition, certain refrigerated vacuum packaged foods may not be used if the expiration date has been exceeded.

“Use By”

Federal, State and local food safety regulators do not require food firms to place "expired by", "use by" or "best before" dates on food products. This information is entirely at the discretion of the manufacturer.



Most people think the various expiration dates refer to when a food will “go bad” or becomes “spoiled,” but the dates are simply an indication of quality and not food safety in most cases. Meats and dairy products can be safely donated even past their “expiration” dates.

So how long past the expiration date can a food product be used? The food eventually has to go bad, doesn't it?



Even canned food products, which can stay wholesome for years due to its packaging, ends up losing its original quality making the food inedible. But with so many different foods, how do you know when an expired food product is too expired? The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) has an app for that! Called “FoodKeeper”, this app has an extensive list of various food products that will have corresponding time frames past “expiration” date labels where foods are still safe to consume. (7)

Special points of interest: FREEZE IT .....TO KEEP IT!

- Freezing a food product can extend its usable life by months
- Food QUALITY will be reduced significantly if a frozen food is thawed and then refrozen again



WASTE NOT OC & THE FRESH PROGRAM

MODULE 4— Labels and Expiration Dates

