

Date Labels, Explained

Most date labels tell you about food quality, not safety.

They are created by manufacturers as a best guess about how long a food will taste freshest. Use your own judgement, not date labels, to determine if food looks, smells, and feels safe to eat.

Is food safe to eat past the date?

"Best if used by" YES

"Best before" YES

"Sell by" YES

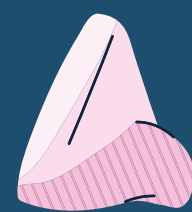
"Freeze by" YES – Freezing by the date will prolong shelf-life

"Use by" Most likely – Be careful with deli meats and prepared foods. Use your senses!

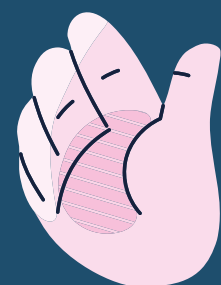
How to tell if food has gone bad: Use your senses!



Is it moldy or discolored? Is the package swollen, leaking, rusted? Is the can extremely dented, especially near the rim? Is the safety seal broken or missing?



Does it smell off?



Is it slimy?



**save the food,
san diego!**

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