

Is This Food Safe to Eat?

The dates on food packages can be a little confusing. The U.S. does not have a standard way for food companies to label foods with a date. Nationally, dates on food packages are required on infant formula and some baby foods. About 20 states require dates on all foods.

Keep It or Toss It? What would you do in these situations?

Your sister and 6-month-old niece are coming to visit. You have some unopened cans of baby formula, but the label is torn and you can't read the date. Is it safe to use?

Don't take risks with infant formula or baby food. The product may have flavor, texture and other quality changes and may have less nutritional value. Toss it!

You pulled a can of tomatoes from your cupboard. You notice a "Best if used by" date that was two weeks ago. Is the food safe?

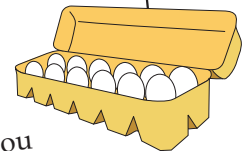
Yes, keep it! "Best if used by" (followed by a date) is a quality date, not a safety date. The food will be at best quality (color, texture, taste) if used by that date; however, it still will remain safe after the date. The U.S. Department of Agriculture says high-acid canned food can be stored for 12 to 18 months.



For best quality, label canned and packaged foods with the date of purchase. Move the "older" foods to the front of the cupboard so you use them first.

The eggs in your refrigerator have a "sell by" date that was a week ago. Are the eggs safe?

Yes, keep them! Eggs have a refrigerator shelf life of three to five weeks after the date you bought them. The "sell by" date tells the store how long to display the food for sale.



You choose a package of ground beef from your freezer and notice a "use by" date that was two months ago. Is it safe?

Yes, keep it! If a perishable food is properly wrapped and frozen, the "use by" date isn't an issue. For best quality, use frozen ground beef within three to four months of the date you froze it.

Visit www.ag.ndsu.edu/foodwise for more information.

This program is funded in part by USDA's Food Stamp Program. The Food Stamp Program provides nutrition assistance to people with low income. It can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact your county Social Services office or call 1-800-755-2716.

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FRUIT SALAD

- 1 16-ounce can fruit cocktail, drained
- 2 bananas, sliced
- 2 oranges, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 2 apples, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 8 ounces nonfat yogurt, vanilla, lemon or pina colada-flavored



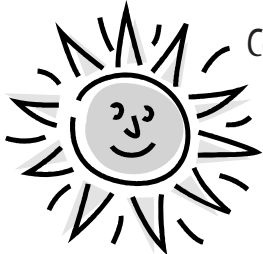
Wash fruit and prepare as directed. Mix fruit and yogurt in bowl. Chill in refrigerator before serving.

Makes four servings. Each serving has 70 calories, less than 1 gram (g) fat, 17 g carbohydrate and 25 percent of the recommendation for vitamin C.

Menu Idea: Grilled hamburgers, baked beans, carrot and celery sticks, fruit salad, low-fat milk.

Quick Tip
Summer's almost here!

Keep cold food (such as cut fruit or vegetable salads) in the refrigerator, in coolers or in containers on ice.



Cold food should spend no more than one hour on the serving table during hot (more than 90 F) weather.

My kids want the TV on during dinner. I don't! I even turn our phone off during our family meals. Am I being too picky?

You're doing the right thing by enjoying family meals – and by turning off all distractions during mealtimes. You may be improving your family's diet, too. Families who eat meals together eat more fruits and vegetables, less soda pop and fewer high-fat foods. Having the TV on during meals is linked with eating fewer fruits and vegetables!

Keep mealtime pleasant. Set the table with colorful napkins and plastic placemats for the kids. Involve everyone at the table with these conversation starters:

- If you could be a food, what would you like to be? Why?
- What should we plan to have for dinner the next two nights? Who would like to help with preparing the food?
- What made you laugh today?

Julie Garden-Robinson, Food and Nutrition Specialist

Contact the local office of the
NDSU Extension Service
for more information
on food and nutrition or
managing your food dollar.

