

SHARED HARVEST FOODBANK'S UNFINISHED & EVER CHANGING FOOD STORAGE & EVALUATION GUIDE

GENERAL STORAGE TIPS

- Store non-perishable foods in a cool, dry place away from sunlight & heat
- Do not store non-perishable foods in cupboards over the stove or refrigerator as the heat from these appliances will shorten the amount of time the food will stay fresh
- Do not store non food products with food or above food, can be stored below food
- Frozen foods should be stored at 0° or below
- Refrigerated foods should be stored at 35° to 40°
- Non-perishable foods should be stored between 50°and 75°
- Potatoes and tubers should be stored in a dark, cool place. Refrigeration is recommended although potatoes may lose taste and quality.
- Do not overcrowd your refrigerator or freezer
- Date all product you receive and rotate older product to the front of the shelves
- Routinely clean shelving, refrigerators and freezers, be sure to routinely remove trash and any foods which have gone beyond our guidelines for safe consumption

DATE DEFINITIONS

- Sell-by Date: This is the last recommended day of sale, but allows for home storage and use. The date is given after the statement, "Sell by (a date)." Breads and baked goods may have "sell-by dates."
- Use-by Date: Tells how long the product will retain top quality after you buy it. You will find this date after the statement, "Use by." Some packaged goods have "use-by dates."
- Expiration Date: This is the last day the product should be used or eaten. You may find this date after the statement, "Do not use after (date)." Eggs may have "expiration dates."
- Pack Date: Canned or packaged foods may have dates that tell you when the product was processed. This does not tell how long the food will be good.

HOW TO KNOW WHEN FOOD IS SPOILED

- Fish: Off odor, gray or greenish gills, sunken eyes, indentations remain in flesh, not rigid
- Red Meat: Off odor, slimy to touch, beef spoils first on surface, pork spoils first at bone
- Poultry: Off odor, slimy to touch, stickiness under wing or at leg and thigh joints, darkening of the wing tip
- Fresh Fruits & Vegetables: Obvious mold or rotten spots
- Mayonnaise Based Salads: Off odor, separated liquid, mold
- Canned Foods: Swelled top or bottom of can, dents along top bottom or side seams, off odor, signs of seepage or rim rust.
- Cereal & Grains: Insects

Please refer to the Product Shelf Life Reference Guide for detailed information by product or email specific questions to chuck@sharedharvest.org

GENERAL SHELF LIFE REFERENCE GUIDE

- Immediately discard any food that is bulging, leaking, has seam rust or denting in cans or torn internal packaging in boxed foods.
- Immediately discard any foods containing eggs, dairy, poultry or seafood once it has reached its expiration date.

<u>Product</u>	<u>Estimated Shelf Life Past Code Date</u>	<u>When to Discard:</u>
Baby Food or Juice	None	at code date
Bakery Goods	3 – 10 days	if moldy
Canned Goods	Up to 1 year	see above
Bottles or Aseptic Containers	Up to 1 year	popped or torn seals see above
Cereal	6 months – 2 years	infestation see above
Crackers	6 months – 2 years	infestation see above
Dried Beans	up to 1 year if frozen, indefinitely	infestation see above
Frozen (all but meats)	3 months – 2 years	freezer burn, discoloration odor
Meat, poultry frozen	3 months – 1 year	freezer burn, discoloration odor
Meats, poultry refrigerated	2 – 5 days	odor, discoloration, slimy
Milk products	None	if past use by date
Pasta and Rice	up to 5 years	infestation, dampness, mold, see above
Produce all but tubers	3 – 12 days	brown/rotten spots, off color, odor, slimy
Tubers, potatoes	up to three months longer if refrigerated	soft, moldy, slimy
Yogurt	7 – 30 days	moldy, odor

The above chart is a quick reference guide to help estimate shelf life, please refer to the detailed guide to help you read manufacturing codes and approved extensions for individual products.

For more information visit: <http://hgic.clemson.edu/factsheets/HGIC3522.htm>
<http://www.ext.colostate.edu/pubs/foodnut/09310.html>

<http://www.ces.uga.edu/pubcd/b914-w.html#Storage Tips for Specific Food Classes>

FOR PERSIHABLE FOODS QUESTIONS CALL USDA'S HOTLINE: 800-535-4555

WHEN IN DOUBT, THROW IT OUT!

MANUFACTURER CODE BREAKER INFORMATION

WHERE TO FIND PRODUCT DATES OR CODES ON PACKAGES

- Boxes: Look on box top, side or bottom for stamped or embossed date or codes
- Jars: Look on jar lid or label for stamped date or codes
- Bottles: Look on bottleneck near top, on lid, on bottom or on label for stamped dates or codes
- Cans: Look on can top or bottom for stamped or embossed date or code
- Envelopes: Look on back panel or bottom edge for stamped date or code
- Bags: Look on the front or back panel or seam for a stamped date or code

GENERAL INFORMATION

A lot of food manufacturers use the Julian Calendar as the basis for their code dating. The Julian Calendar assigns a sequential number to each day of each month in a year, as follows:

January 1st – 31st = 001-031

February 1st – 28th = 032-059

March 1st – 31st = 060-090

April 1st – 30th = 091-120

May 1st – 31st = 121-151

June 1st – 30th = 152-181

July 1st – 31st = 182-212

August 1st – 30th = 213-243

September 1st – 30th = 244-273

October 1st – 31st = 274-304

November 1st – 30th = 305-334

December 1st – 31st = 335-365

HOW TO READ PRODUCTION CODES BY MANUFACTURER

- Kraft & Nestle: Both of these companies use the Julian Calendar for manufacturing codes
 - The first number in the code indicates the last digit of the year in which the product was manufactured
 - The next 3 numbers indicate the day of the year on the Julian Calendar the product was manufactured
 - The final set of numbers or letters indicate at what plant and what shift the product was manufactured
- Welches: The production code appears as a series of numbers and letters
 - The first number is the last digit of the year in which the product was manufactured
 - The second letter is the producing plant
 - The third and fourth numbers indicate the day of the month the product was manufactured
 - The fifth letter indicates the month, starting with A for January
- Old Orchard Brands: The production code appears on the side of the cap
 - The first three numbers refers to the day of production using the Julian Calendar
 - The fourth number is the last digit of the year the product was manufactured
 - The last letter indicates the plant of manufacture
- Indian Summer: The production code appears as a series of numbers
 - The first number is the last digit in the year the product was manufactured
 - The second and third numbers identify the packing plant
 - The fourth, fifth and sixth numbers indicate the day of production using the Julian Calendar
 - There may be 4 more numbers that indicate the time of day