



**Final Code/Date Extension Guidelines For End Users
FY2020-2021**

Understanding Food Dating				
What Kind of Dating?	What the code looks like	How it is used	When to dispose	May be found on
“Expiration” or “Use By” date	12-24-89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The manufacturer cannot guarantee the nutritional value of the product after this date 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refer to food chart Food is safe to eat EXCEPT FOR baby food and nutritional supplements, which should be thrown out on that date 	Baby food and nutritional supplements Bacon, lunch meat
“Sell-by” date	12-24-89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informs the retailers when to sell the product by or remove from their shelves Safe to eat after the date Freshness date 	If the food has been properly handled it is safe to eat for days/weeks beyond date, refer to product chart	Bread, milk, yogurt, eggs, cheese, milk
“Best-by” or “Best If Used By” or “Enjoy By”	12-24-89	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is the manufacturer’s recommendation for when the food will be at peak quality Safe to eat after the date Quality date 	Personal taste and preference	Acidic food in cans, non-acidic food in cans, rice, pasta

The following tables provide shelf life guidelines for the storage of many foods within each food category. Please note these guidelines only apply to **unopened food**. The categories are divided into:

- **Shelf-Stable Foods**
- **Refrigerated Foods**
- **Baked Goods**
- **Frozen foods**

Shelf-Stable Food Extensions	
Product	Storage Life Past Code Date
Staples	
Beans, Dried (pinto, red, lentils, etc)	12 months*
Canned Goods	High Acid (pineapple, tomatoes, pickles, etc.): 12-18 months ** Low Acid (meats, fish, beans, corn, soup, etc): 2-3 years**
Cereal (hot and cold varieties)	12 months*
Coffee and Decaf	Ground in Cans: 2 years* Jars and Tins: 12 months* Whole Beans: 3 weeks*
Dry Egg Noodles, Dry Pasta (spaghetti, penne, etc)	3 years**
Flour	White: 12 months* Whole Wheat: 1 month*
Rice	White or Wild: 2 years* Brown: 12 months* Flavor or herb mix: 6 months*
Sugar	Brown, raw: 4 months* White, granulated: 2 years*
Beverages	
Bottled Water	Indefinite**
Juice Boxes	6 months*
Shelf Stable Soy Milk	6 months***
Shelf Stable Milk	6 months***
Condiments	
Mustard/Horseradish/BBQ Sauce	12 months*
Ketchup/jam/jelly/preserves	18 months***
Mayo	12 months****
Honey	2 years – safe after crystallization***
Salsa	18 months**
Snacks	
Beef jerky	12 months*
Cookies, Packaged	4 months***
Crackers (saltines, ritz, etc)	8 months*
Chips	2 months*
Granola Bars	12 months****
Popcorn	Packets: 12 months* Dry Kernels: 2 years*
Peanut butter	4 years**
Nuts	Jars or cans: 1 year*

Dried fruits	6 months*
Oils and Sauces	
Oils	Olive, vegetable, nut: 6 months* Vegetable oil spray: 2 years*
Vinegar	2 years*
Salad Dressing	Bottled: 1 year* Dry mix: 2 years**
Sauce mixes	Non-dairy (spaghetti, taco, etc): 2 years* Cream sauces, milk solids: 1 year*
Gravy	Jars and cans: 5 years* Dry gravy mixes: 2 years*
Spices	Indefinite***

Refrigerated Foods Extensions	
Product	Storage Life Past Code Date
Beverages	
Juice (cartons, fruit drinks, punch)	3 weeks*
Dairy Products	
Milk and non dairy milk	1 week*
Butter	3 months*
Whipping Cream/Aerosol Whipped Cream	Whipping, ultrapasteurized: 1 month* Whipped, sweetened: 1 day* Aerosol can, real whipped cream: 4 weeks* Aerosol can, nondairy topping: 3 months*
Cheeses	Hard (cheddar, swiss, block parmesan): 6 months* Shredded (cheddar, mozzarella): 1 month* Processed slices: 2 months* Soft (brie, goat, cottage, ricotta): 1 week* Cream cheese: 2 weeks*
Dips (sour cream based)	2 weeks*
Eggs in shell	5 weeks*
Margarine	6 months*
Sour Cream	3 weeks*
Yogurt	2 weeks*
Pudding (cups)	1-2 days***
Deli Products	
Fruit (cut)	Consume by date shown
Pesto, Salsa	Consume by date shown*
Bagged Greens (spinach, lettuce, kale)	3-5 days
Prepared Salad Bowls	2 days
Prepared Salads (macaroni, egg, potato, chicken, tuna)	3-5 days***
Hummus	3-7 days***
Meats (raw)	
Poultry (whole, whole cuts)	2 days***
Ground Meats (poultry, beef, pork)	2 days***
Beef (roast, steak)	3-5 days***
Meats (processed)	
Hot Dogs	2 Weeks***

Lunch Meats	Opened or deli: 5 days* Unopened: 2 weeks*
Bacon	Unopened 2 weeks*** Opened 1 week***
Fish and Seafood (Uncooked)	
Fish (salmon, cod, pollock)	2 days***
Shrimp	2 days***
Dough Products	
Cookie Dough, Pie Crust	Use-by date*
Pasta (fresh)	Use-by date on package*
Tube cans (biscuit, rolls, pizza dough, etc)	Use-by date*
Soy Products	
Soy or rice beverage	10 days*
Tofu	1 week or package date*
Baby Products	
All baby products	Use before date shown*
Fruits and Vegetables	See "The Food Keeper"*

Baked Goods Extensions			
Product	Shelf Storage Past Code Date	Refrigerator Storage Past Code Date	Freezer Storage Past Code Date
Bagels	1 day****	1 week*	3 months**
Bread*	5 days**	7 days*	3 months**
Cakes (angel food, chiffon, sponge)**	2 days*	1 week*	2 months*
Cookies (bakery or homemade)	3 weeks*	2 months*	12 months*
Croissants, butter	1 day*	1 week*	2 months*
Danish, Muffins	2 days*	1 week*	2 months*
Doughnuts	Glazed or cake: 2 days*	Glazed or cake: 1 week* Cream filled: 4 days*	Glazed or cake: 1 month*

*Any breads containing meat, hard cooked eggs, custard filling or other perishable ingredients must be refrigerated within 2 hours

**Refrigerate any cake with frosting made of dairy products or eggs

Frozen Food Extensions	
Product	Storage Life Past Code Date
Dairy Products	
Butter	9 months*
Cheese	Hard (cheddar, swiss, block parmesan): 6 months* Shredded (cheddar, mozzarella): 3-4 months* Processed slices: do not freeze* Soft (brie): 6 months* Cottage, ricotta, cream: do not freeze*
Milk	3 months*
Ice cream, frozen yogurt	2-3 months***
Baked Products	
Bread	3 months*
Fruits and Vegetables - See Food Keeper	

Meat Products	
Raw Chicken Parts	9 months*
Raw Whole Chicken or Turkey	12 months*
Chicken nuggets	3 months*
Chops, steak, roasts (beef, pork, lamb, veal)	12 months*
Ground Meat (beef, pork, lamb, chicken)	4 months*
Pork	12 months*
Frozen dinners with beef, poultry, and fish	6 months**
Hot dogs	9 months***
Deli Products	
Bacon	1 month*
Ham, fully cooked	2 months*
Sausage	2 months*
Fish Products	
Fish raw (cod, flounder, sole)	8 months*
Fatty fish raw (mackerel, salmon)	3 months*
Raw shrimp, scallops, and squid	6 months*
Cooked fish	2 months*
Cooked shellfish	3 months*

The following sources were used: “The Food Keeper” developed by the Food Marketing Institute and Cornell University Institute of Food Science (denoted by *); “Food Storage and Shelf life guidelines”, developed by Foodshare (denoted by **); “Shelf Life of Food Bank Products” by Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank (denoted by ***); and the Alameda County Community Food Bank Code and Date Extensions (denoted by ****). If a food is not found here, please refer to “The Food Keeper” developed by the Food Marketing Institute and Cornell University Institute of Food Science (<http://www.fmi.org/industry-topics/consumer-affairs/food-keeper-food-storage-database>). Where there were conflicting timeframes, the longest timeframe was chosen as our objective is to maximize the amount of food we can feed hungry people.

Please note that some items that we receive may not be covered in this guide. Should some items or questions arise, call our Nutrition Education Dept for further assistance. We will determine a safe extension for the product in question as quickly as possible.