

These are recommendations only. Always inspect products and discard if signs of spoilage appear.

## For Food Safety Sake: Keep or Toss? Distributing and Using Donated Products

Category	Product(s)	Storage and Usage Guidelines
Baby Food	Moist food	Do not use after date on container. Refrigerate after opening. Use within 3 days once opened.
	Dry infant cereal	Do not distribute or use after date on container. Store in a cool, dry location.
	Infant formula – wet or dry	Do not distribute or use after date on container. Store in a sealed container. Keep liquid formula refrigerated after opening.
Bakery Items	Breads, rolls, cakes, Danishes, cookies	Use for up to 1 week after date on package. Discard if mold appears.
Canned Foods (includes trays and pouches)	Canned fruits, tomato products, and pickled foods	Use for up to 2 years past the date marked on the product. Discard cans if deeply dented, or any tears or rips in flexible packages or foil tops.*
	Canned meat, poultry, fish, soup, vegetables, and pasta	Use for up to 2 years past the date marked on the product. Refrigerate after opening. Discard cans if deeply dented, or any tears or rips in flexible packaging or trays.*
Cereals, Chips and Crackers	All types	Use for up to 2 years past date marked on package. Product may stale before then.
Condiments	Ketchup, mustard, mayo	Distribute up to 2 years past date. Discard discolored or separation has occurred. Refrigerate after opening.
Cream-filled Pastries & Cream Pies	Pastries or pies with whipped cream topping or custard filling	Keep refrigerated. Safe to distribute up to 5 days past date on package <b>if</b> kept refrigerated.
Dry Mixes	Soup, meal-in-a-box (i.e. meal helper)	Distribute up to 2 years past date marked.
	Potato, pudding, flavored rice or pasta, seasonings	Distribute 6 months past date on package. Store in a cool, dry location.
Jars	Glass	Use for up to 2 years past date on container. Refrigerate after opening. EXCEPTION for juice (see below).
	Plastic	Use for up to 2 years past date on package. Refrigerate after opening. EXCEPTION for juice (see below).
Juice	Jars, cans or juice boxes	Distribute up to 6 months past date on package. Refrigerate after opening.
Mixes (bakery)	Cake, muffin, cookie, pancake	Distribute up to 6 months after date on package. Store in a cool, dry place.
Flour	Wheat, rice, soy	Distribute up to 1 year past date on package. Store in a cool, dry place. Discard if signs of insect infestation appear.
Rice & Pasta	Unflavored	Distribute up to 2 years past date on package.
Whole Grains	Whole wheat flour, corn meal, oatmeal	Distribute whole wheat products up to 6 months past date; other whole-grains up to 2 years. Store in a cool, dry place.
Salad Dressing	Packaged, in closed containers	Distribute up to 2 years past date on package. Refrigerate after opening. Once opened, use within 2 months.

\***Deep dents** have sharp edges and are large enough to rest a finger in the dent. Discard cans with deep dents. Discard cans that are bulging or leaking. Discard cans with heavy rust (pitting).

**“Sell by”** – Quality date found on eggs, milk and lunch meat. Distribute by this date, with time still left for storage and use at home.

**“Use by or Best by”** – Quality date found on canned food and cereal. Except for baby food, product may be safely used and distributed well past this date.

**“Expiration date”** – Quality date on infant formula and vitamins. Do not distribute infant formula or vitamins past date.

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## A Guide to Refrigerated or Frozen Products

Cheese	<b>Soft</b> (cottage, string, feta, cheese spread)	Distribute up to 1 week past date; use within 3 days. Keep refrigerated.
	Cream cheese (spread)	Distribute up to 2 weeks past date; use within 7 days. Refrigerate. Discard if moldy.
	<b>Hard</b> (Cheddar, parmesan)	Good almost indefinitely. Keep refrigerated. Discard if moldy.
	<b>Medium</b> (muenster, brick, mozzarella)	If kept cold, can be distributed for many months past the date. Keep refrigerated. Discard if moldy.
Eggs	From a licensed processor, dated	Distribute up to 3-5 weeks past date on carton; use within 2 weeks. Keep refrigerated.
Juice	Fresh juice, stored refrigerated	Keep refrigerated. Consume within 5 days of product date.
Milk	Fluid milk	Keep refrigerated. Consume within 5 days of date.
	Canned or boxed milk	Store unopened up to 1 year past date on package. Refrigerate once opened. Use within 7 days.
Soft Desserts	Puddings, cheese cake	Distribute up to 1 week past date; use within 3 days. Keep refrigerated.
Yogurt & Sour Cream	Yogurt, smoothies, sour cream	Distribute up to 14 days past the date on the container; use within 7 days. Keep refrigerated.
Casseroles	Lasagna, mac & cheese, etc. stored refrigerated	Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 3 days, or freeze. Reheat thoroughly.
Fresh salsa, pickles	Fruit or vegetable salsa, fresh pickles, etc.	Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 5 days.
Fruits, vegetables	Fresh or fresh-cut, e.g. chopped peppers	Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 2-3 days.
Meat salads	Egg, tuna, chicken	Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 3-5 days.
Sandwiches	All meat or cheese types	Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 2 days.
Soups & Stews	All types	Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 3 days, or freeze. Reheat thoroughly.
Poultry (chicken, turkey)	Fresh (uncooked)	Cook or freeze within 2 days. Keep cold.
	Cooked	Use within 5 days. Keep cold.
Ground Meat	Beef, chicken, turkey, pork, lamb	Cook or freeze within 2 days. Once cooked, use within 5 days. Keep cold.
Meat (beef, pork, lamb)	Fresh (uncooked)	Cook or freeze within 3-5 days. Keep cold.
	Cooked	Use within 5 days. Keep cold.
Ham	Fresh or canned	Keep refrigerated. Cook or freeze by date marked. Once cooked, use within 2 weeks.
Lunch Meat	Deli sliced	Use within 2 days or freeze. Keep refrigerated.
	Packaged, e.g. bacon and hot dogs	Distribute up to 2 weeks past date. Once opened, use or freeze within 2 days. Cook bacon or hot dogs before eating.
Sausage	Fresh (uncooked)	Cook or freeze within 2 days. Keep cold.
	Cooked	Use or freeze within 2 days of opening.
	Hard/dry (summer sausage)	Shelf stable. Store for 3 months on pantry shelf.