

Sell-by, best-by, use-by- what's the difference?



"Best if used by or before" or "best by" date

This phrase indicates the maximum amount of time when the food will have its best flavor and acceptable quality. It is intended to guide consumers and retailers.



"Sell-By" date

This date label is used on foods displayed in stores and refers to the maximum allowable time for the product to be displayed. This label is used to guide food retailers and manufacturers.



"Use-By" date

Refers to the last recommended date for a product to be used at its peak quality. Unless this term is used for infant formula, it is not a safety label.



"Freeze-By" date

Tells food handlers the maximum date when a product can be frozen to preserve peak quality.



"Expiration" date

This term is an absolute date that tells food handlers when the product is no longer safe for consumption. This label is commonly used in shelf-stable products.



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