



Manufacturer/Expiration Dates

Food product dating, typically known as “Open Dating,” is a date stamped on food packaging that indicates when a product is at its best quality. **These dates are not indicators of food safety.** They are only indicators of quality. *Serving quality meals is our mission* and it is important to pay attention to manufacturer dates; rotate product inventory; use products quickly; and serve food when it is at its peak quality.

COMMONLY USED TERMS

BEST IF USED BY/BEFORE: date indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

SELL BY: date is for inventory management and indicates how long to offer a product for sale. It is not a safety date.

USE BY: date is the last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. It is not a safety date except when used on infant formula.

FREEZE BY: date indicates when a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

PACK BY: date indicates when a product was packaged or processed. This date may help to determine the age of the product, but it does not necessarily provide useful information on its quality.

GEORGIA FOOD CODE

The Georgia Food Code Rule (511-6-1) considers expiration dates, sell-by dates, use-by dates and best-if-used-by dates the same. It does not reference pack dates nor does it have any regulations regarding this date. Because the various dating systems are indicators of quality and not safety, regulations concerning manufacturer dates depends on the food.

FOODS THAT CANNOT BE SOLD PAST THE MANUFACTURER DATE

- Prepackaged Sandwiches
 - Eggs
 - Milk
 - Time/Temperature Control for Safety Foods (TCS) that are labeled “keep refrigerated” or “keep frozen.”*
- *The term “keep refrigerated after opening” does NOT apply.

FOODS THAT CAN BE SOLD PAST THE MANUFACTURER DATE

Non-TCS foods such as crackers, bread, chips, etc.**

**Once a product passes the expiration date, quality may be compromised as unpleasant flavors, odors, and textures can develop.



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