





Consumer Best Before Timetable



Most people confuse the terms "expiry date" and "best before date." This confusion continues to be a major source of avoidable food waste in Canada. Only five foods should not be consumed past the expiry date: infant formula, meal replacements, formulated liquid diets (medical), very low-energy foods (medical), and nutritional supplements. Everything else is edible after the best before date has passed. Always use your senses to evaluate food quality if food is past the best before date.

BBD = Best Before Date

FOOD CATEGORY	ITEMS	CONSUME BY
PRODUCE 	Perishable fresh fruits and vegetables	No spoilage, blemishes, visible decay, mold or bio-degrading smell
	Shelf stable canned fruits and vegetables, pickles, sauces, or pastes	1 year past BBD
DAIRY 	Perishable milk (including dairy alternatives), butter, yogurt, cheese, ice cream, sour cream	2 weeks past BBD IF FROZEN 2-3 months past BBD
	Shelf stable evaporated, powdered, or milk alternatives	1 year past BBD
	Shelf stable baby formula, supplemental beverages (i.e.: Ensure)	Expiry date
MEAT & FISH / EGGS & SOY / LEGUMES / NUT PRODUCTS & NUTS 	Raw meat and fish	BBD or IF FROZEN : Beef, lamb, pork, whole poultry: 1 year past BBD Poultry pieces: 6 months past BBD Ground meat: 2-3 months past BBD Fish: 2-6 months past BBD
	Cooked luncheon meats, tofu, eggs	1 week past BBD
	Shelf stable canned meat, fish, beans, chickpeas, nuts, nut butter, peanut butter, seeds, spam	1 year past BBD
BREAD / CRACKERS & CEREAL / GRAIN 	Perishable bread, buns, bagels, pitas, tortillas, flat bread, na'an, matzah	No spoilage, blemishes, visible decay, mold or bio-degrading smell
	Dry, shelf stable cereal, crackers, flour, oats, pasta, rice, quinoa, meals or sides, energy bars	1 year past BBD
	Meal replacement or supplement bars	Expiry date
BAKED GOODS / SNACKS / DESSERTS 	Perishable cakes, cookies, pies, danishes, chocolate, pudding	72 hours past BBD IF FROZEN 1 month past BBD
	Shelf stable cookies, chips, popcorn, bagged snacks, snack cakes, granola bars	1 year past BBD
PREPARED 	Pre-cooked or ready-to-eat meals; deli salads, pizza, sandwiches	72 hours past BBD IF FROZEN 1 month past BBD
	Frozen dinners, microwavable meals	1 year past BBD
	Shelf stable canned soups, stews, meals	1 year past BBD
	Shelf stable baby food	1 year past BBD
CONDIMENTS 	Frozen sauces, gravies	6 months past BBD
	Shelf stable mustard, relish, ketchup, jam, margarine, mayonnaise, oil, salad dressing, vinegars, spices, sauces, toppings	1 year past BBD
BEVERAGES 	Juice, water, coconut water	3-6 months past BBD
	Other drinks; coffee, tea, sport or energy drinks, crystals	3-6 months past BBD