GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SHELF LIFE
GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SHELF LIFE

In response to an increased need for more information surrounding shelf life of food and guidelines for distributing food past its best before date, Food Banks Canada is pleased to expand on its existing guidelines chart to provide a more in-depth look into food categories and specific food items. Diving deeper into each food category, this booklet provides detailed information and guidelines for distributing food past its best before date. Charts will help users reference information on how long to distribute food past its best before date while considering factors like its storage temperature and whether it’s fresh, canned or frozen product.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- General Guidelines For Distributing Food Past The Best Before Date ..........2-3
- Fruit & Vegetables ........................................................................................................4
- Milks, Cream & Other Beverages ................................................................................5
- Grains, Cereals & Legumes .................................................................................................8
- Fats, Oils & Dressings .........................................................................................................7
- Prepared & Deli Foods ........................................................................................................8
- Eggs, Cheese & Dairy Products ............................................................................................9
- Meat, Poultry, Seafood & Alternatives ..............................................................................10
- Baby Food & Meal Replacements ....................................................................................11
- Miscellaneous .....................................................................................................................12
# Guideline for Distributing Food - Past the Best Before Date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Description</th>
<th>Room Temperature</th>
<th>Refrigerated</th>
<th>Frozen</th>
<th>Canned / Jarred</th>
<th>Boxed / Bagged</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fruit / Vegetables - Whole, Uncut, Unpeeled, Undamaged</td>
<td>Fresh, whole 1 - 7 days</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>7 - 10 days (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>1 Year</td>
<td>6 - 12 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit &amp; Vegetable Juices &amp; Soft Drinks</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>Up to 1 Week</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Up to 1 Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Granola, Flours, Rices, Dry Pastas, Cookies, Crackers, Breakfast/Lunch Cereal Bars</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3 - 4 days whole pieces; 1 - 2 days ground; 1 - 2 days seafood/fish</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6 - 12 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Packaged and Bulk Meats, Poultry, Fish</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>3 - 5 deli counter; 7 days commercially package</td>
<td>2 - 3 days meal items; 3 - 4 days cut fruits and vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>UHT - 6 months, Powdered*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepared meals, fresh pasta, cooked meats, Mixed Salads, Soups, Stews, Cut produce</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>1 - 2 Days (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>1 - 2 weeks cultured</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deli Meats, Sausages</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milk (Fresh, Powdered, Canned, UHT tetrapak); Soy &amp; Almond Beverages</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
<td>Yogurt, kefir, sour cream</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* UHT - Ultra High Temperature (powdered milk)
### Infant Formula and Nutritional Supplements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Note: These products contain Expiry Dates - not Best Before Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cheese, cream &amp; soft cheeses, hard cheeses</td>
<td>Cottage cheese, may include: canned pastas, canned meats/fish, tomato sauces, condiments, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 2 hours (if refrigeration needed)</td>
<td>Laundry Detergent, Mixed Product Pallets, Deodorants, Body Washes, Diapers, Infant Wipes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 weeks cottage cheese; 3-6 months hard blocks; 1-2 months soft blocks</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Months</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 months hard cheese blocks; 3-6 month soft blocks</td>
<td>6-12 Months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-12 Months</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6-12 Months (shelf stable oils)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2 Year</td>
<td>1 Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* **Milk powder:** Temperature is a critical quality factor for milk powder. Keep milk powder cool.

* **Best Before Date:** This gives consumers information as to when the product is at its best - with sensory qualities as acceptable as the day it was made when stored under appropriate conditions and packaging is intact. Best Before dates indicate the shelf life of foods. They are not indicators of food safety. Some manufacturers changed their wording in 2018 to “Better Before”.

* **Expiry Date:** Tells consumers that the product may not be providing them with the nutrients expected of the product and they should no longer consume it after that date. *Products with Expiry Dates must not be shared past the date on the packaging.*

* **Products Include:** Infant Formula (Canned or Boxed, Liquid or Powdered), and many Nutritional Supplements and Meal Replacements (Canned, Boxed, or Ready to Use, Liquid or Powdered).

Note that baby foods for older babies and toddlers have Best Before dates, not expiry dates.

### Food Products and their ability to be shared should always be based on:

1. Ensuring the product has been handled safely (ie. Chilled product is kept chilled).
2. Assessing all packaging for integrity (i.e., dents, creases, etc.) based on Food Banks Canada Safe Food Handling Standards.
3. That the product is at a level of quality (e.g., taste and smell) that is still worth sharing.
4. That the Manufacturer’s Branding will not be compromised if the product is shared.

**NOTE:** This information is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.

**FOR REFERENCE:**
- Stilltasty.com and EatByDate.com for additional guidelines.
- Utah State University Cooperative Extension Service, Food Storage: Dried Milk, Available at: http://extension.usu.edu/foodstorage/htm/dried-milk

**INFORMATION:** Contact Food Banks Canada at 1-877-535-0958 or info@foodbankscanada.ca | Date created: January 2011. Date updated: February 2019.
FRUIT & VEGETABLES

NOTE: Most fresh fruits and vegetables do not have best before dates - quality determines whether they should be shared.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Canned fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Depends on produce</td>
<td>1-6 weeks</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>Cold shelf vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, parsnips, etc) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>Salad mixes and leafy greens (bailed, prewashed)</td>
<td>Shelled fresh garden peas</td>
<td>Bean sprouts (fresh, bagged)</td>
<td>Tender fruit (peaches, nectarines, plums) - depends on fruit and condition</td>
<td>Harder fruit (e.g. apples, pears) - depends on fruit and condition</td>
<td>Berries (depends on fruit and condition)</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up fruit</td>
<td>Fresh fruit salad (mixed in juice)</td>
<td>Dried fruit various types</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagged frozen fruits &amp; vegetable</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>Up to 1 week</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>1-3 days</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh, whole, undamaged, uncut fruits &amp; vegetable</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>Cold shelf vegetables (e.g. broccoli, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>Up to 1 week</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>1-3 days</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole fruits &amp; vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>Cold shelf vegetables (e.g. broccoli, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>Up to 1 week</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>1-3 days</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>6-12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>2-4 weeks</td>
<td>1-2 months</td>
<td>5-10 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>2-4 weeks</td>
<td>1-2 months</td>
<td>5-10 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>1 day</td>
<td>2-4 weeks</td>
<td>1-2 months</td>
<td>5-10 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6-8 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6-8 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6-8 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6-8 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6-8 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruits</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Root vegetables (e.g. carrots, celery, green-top carrots) - depends on vegetable and condition</td>
<td>Fresh, cut up vegetables</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6-8 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If juice develops an off odor, flavor or appearance, or if mold appears, it should be discarded.

The information in this table is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.

The suitability for sharing foods should always be based on:

1) Ensuring the product has been handled safely (i.e., refrigerated products are kept at 0°C-4°C).
2) Assessing all packaging for integrity (i.e., damage, dents, creases, etc.) based on Food Banks Canada Safe Food Handling Standards.
3) Ensuring the product is at a level of quality (e.g., taste and smell) that is still worth sharing.
4) Ensuring the manufacturer’s brand will not be compromised if the product is shared.

Assumptions: Refrigerator temperatures are maintained at 0°C-4°C (food keeps fresh longer at 0°C-2°C than at 3°C-4°C); freezer temperatures are maintained at -18°C; room temperature storage is 10-25°C, dry and dark.

Best Before Date is an indicator of the shelf life of a food. It is not an indicator of food safety. When stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact, the food is expected to have acceptable taste and smell at its best before date.

Expiry Date is an indicator of nutritional quality. At the Expiry Date the food will have the nutritional content declared on the label if the food was stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact. Most foods have Best Before dates. Foods such as infant formulas and meal replacements will have Expiry Dates. Products should not be shared after the Expiry Date.

For more information contact Food Banks Canada at 1-877-535-0958 or info@foodbankscanada.ca | Date updated: February 2019.
# MILKS CREAM & OTHER BEVERAGES

### Product Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Descriptions</th>
<th>Milk and non-dairy beverages (e.g., soya, almond, rice, coconut beverages) Refrigerated</th>
<th>Ultra High Temperature Pasteurized (Tetra-Pak or pouch) Milk and non-dairy beverages (e.g., soya, almond, coconut beverages) Shelf stable</th>
<th>Milk Powder* (pasteurized bag, box or canned powder)</th>
<th>Evaporated Milk Commercially canned</th>
<th>Pasteurized Refrigerated liquid cream</th>
<th>Non-dairy Refrigerated liquid coffee whitener</th>
<th>Non-dairy Powdered coffee whitener</th>
<th>Juice boxes shelf stable</th>
<th>Juice cans shelf stable</th>
<th>Refrigerated juice – pasteurized</th>
<th>Frozen juice concentrate</th>
<th>Instant coffee, coffee pods, tea bags; hot chocolate, ovaltine</th>
<th>Powdered dry drink mixes E.g. ice tea, flavoured crystals</th>
<th>Canned and bottled soda/pop, vitamin water, energy drinks</th>
<th>Bottled water plain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time Frame Past Best Before</td>
<td>Refrigerated: 2-3 days dairy; 3-5 days soy, rice, almond, coconut, hemp milks</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>5-7 days</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>7-10 days</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Temperature</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>1-6 months</td>
<td>Non-fat in bag 3 months; non-fat in can 2 years; whole milk</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>2-4 months</td>
<td>2-3 months</td>
<td>6-9 months</td>
<td>7-10 days</td>
<td>&lt; 2 hours</td>
<td>6-12 month</td>
<td>9-12 month</td>
<td>2-3 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1-2 weeks</td>
<td>5-7 days</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>7-10 days</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2-4 months; texture will change, whipping cream will not be whippable</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>8-12 months</td>
<td>8-12 months</td>
<td>Instant coffee indefinite; whole bean coffee 2-3 years; ground coffee 1-2 years</td>
<td>1-2 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Milk powder Temperature is a critical quality factor for milk powder. Keep milk powder cool at 10°C or lower, milk powder can have 3-5 year shelf life; at 32°C, off flavours will develop within 6 months.

**Best Before Date** This gives consumers information as to when the product is at its best - with sensory qualities as acceptable as the day it was made when stored under appropriate conditions and packaging is intact. Best Before dates indicate the shelf life of foods. They are not indicators of food safety.

**Expiry Date** Tells consumers that the product may not be providing them with the nutrients expected of the product and they should no longer consume it after that date. Products with Expiry Dates must never be shared past the date on the packaging.

### Food Products and their ability to be shared should always be based on:

1. Ensuring the product has been handled safely (i.e. Chilled product is kept chilled).
2. Assessing all cans for integrity (i.e., dents, creases, etc.) based on Food Banks Canada Safe Food Handling Standards.
3. That the product is at a level of quality (e.g., taste and smell) that is still worth sharing.
4. That the Manufacturer’s Branding will not be compromised if the product is shared.

---

Note: This information is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.


## GRAINS, CEREALS & LEGUMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Descriptions</th>
<th>Room Temperature</th>
<th>Refrigerated</th>
<th>Frozen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dry crackers and cookies, rice cakes</td>
<td>1 - 2 months</td>
<td>1 - 2 weeks</td>
<td>4 - 5 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bakery style loaves, rolls, muffins, etc.</td>
<td>2 - 3 days</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercially packaged loaves, rolls, bagels, muffins, etc.</td>
<td>5 - 7 days</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry pasta (e.g. wheat or rice noodles of various shapes)</td>
<td>1 - 2 years</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh refrigerated pasta/ noodles (e.g. wheat or rice noodles)</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole grain flours with germ/fat content (e.g. whole wheat flour, Brown Rice)</td>
<td>4 - 6 months: brown rice 6 - 8 months</td>
<td>6 - 8 months: brown rice 6 - 8 months</td>
<td>6 - 8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White flour, cornmeal/corn flour, chickpea (gram/besan) flour</td>
<td>Corn flour 9-12 months; corn meal 1-2 years; white &amp; rice flour 6-8 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White rice, whole barley and low fat grains</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>6 - 8 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dried beans, peas and lentils</td>
<td>Instant oatmeal, flavoured Instant oatmeal; 1-5 minute oatmeals</td>
<td>6 - 9 months; other 2-3 years</td>
<td>6 - 12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instant - 1-2 years; flavoured 6-9 months; other 2-3 years</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Various boxed/packaged breakfast-type cereals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cake, cookie brownie, muffin, biscuit, pancake/waffle mixes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**The information in this table is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.**

**Assumptions:** refrigerator temperatures are maintained at 0°C-4°C (food keeps fresh longer at 0°C-2°C than at 3°C-4°C); freezer temperatures are maintained at -18°C; room temperature storage is 10-25°C, dry and dark.

**Best Before Date** is an indicator of the shelf life of a food. It is not an indicator of food safety. When stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact, the food is expected to have acceptable taste and smell at its best before date.

**Expiry Date** is an indicator of nutritional quality. At the Expiry Date the food will have the nutritional content declared on the label if the food was stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact. Most foods have Best Before dates. Foods such as infant formulas and meal replacements will have Expiry Dates. Products should not be shared after the Expiry Date.

For more information contact Food Banks Canada at 1-877-535-0958 or info@foodbankscanada.ca | Date updated: February 2019.
## FATS, OILS & DRESSINGS

### Product Descriptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>OIL (LIQUID)</th>
<th>OIL (LIQUID)</th>
<th>HARD FATS</th>
<th>HARD FATS</th>
<th>HARD FATS</th>
<th>SALAD DRESSING</th>
<th>SALAD DRESSING</th>
<th>SALAD DRESSING</th>
<th>DESSERT TOPPINGS</th>
<th>DESSERT TOPPINGS</th>
<th>DESSERT TOPPINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAST BEST</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEFORE</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIL (LIQUID)</td>
<td>Cooking oil - e.g. canola, corn, safflower, vegetable oil</td>
<td>Specialty oils - e.g. sesame, walnut, olive (protect from light)</td>
<td>Ghee, coconut oil</td>
<td>Margarine</td>
<td>Butter</td>
<td>Shortening / lard</td>
<td>Mayonnaise</td>
<td>Creamy dressings</td>
<td>Vinagrette dressings</td>
<td>Whipped topping - aerosol can (refrigerated)</td>
<td>Dessert topping mix dry powdered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Temperature</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>Olive 12 months; Sesame 6 months; walnut or hazelnut 1 month;</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>3 - 4 months</td>
<td>1 - 2 months</td>
<td>3 - 4 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated</td>
<td>2 years (some oils will separate)</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>4 - 5 months</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>6 - 8 months</td>
<td>6 - 12 months; unsalted 6 - 9 months; cultured 6 - 9 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in this table is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.

The suitability for sharing foods should always be based on:

1) Ensuring the product has been handled safely (i.e., refrigerated products are kept at 0°C-4°C).
2) Assessing all packaging for integrity (i.e., damage, dents, creases, etc.) based on Food Banks Canada Safe Food Handling Standards.
3) Ensuring the product is at a level of quality (e.g., taste and smell) that is still worth sharing.
4) Ensuring the manufacturer’s brand will not be compromised if the product is shared.

**Assumptions:** refrigerator temperatures are maintained at 0°C-4°C (food keeps fresh longer at 0°C-2°C than at 3°C-4°C); freezer temperatures are maintained at -18°C; room temperature storage is 10-25°C, dry and dark.

**Best Before Date** is an indicator of the shelf life of a food. It is not an indicator of food safety. When stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact, the food is expected to have acceptable taste and smell at its best before date.

**Expiry Date** is an indicator of nutritional quality. At the Expiry Date the food will have the nutritional content declared on the label if the food was stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact. Most foods have Best Before dates. Foods such as infant formulas and meal replacements will have Expiry Dates. Products should not be shared after the Expiry Date.

For more information contact Food Banks Canada at 1-877-535-0958 or info@foodbankscanada.ca | Date updated: February 2019.
## PREPARED & DELI FOODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>DELI SALADS</th>
<th>HOT DELI MEALS</th>
<th>COLD DELI MEALS</th>
<th>MEAL MIXES</th>
<th>CONDIMENTS</th>
<th>CONDIMENTS</th>
<th>CONDIMENTS</th>
<th>PASTA SAUCES</th>
<th>PASTA SAUCES</th>
<th>SAUCE MIXES</th>
<th>CANNED FOODS</th>
<th>VINEGAR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Room Temperature</td>
<td>Mixed deli salads</td>
<td>Hot prepared meals (e.g. rotisserie chicken)</td>
<td>Cold meals (e.g. sandwiches) - must not be unrefrigerated, depends on condition</td>
<td>Macaroni &amp; Cheese dinner mixes (dry boxed mixes)</td>
<td>Tomato based chili sauce, salsa, taco sauce (bottle/jar)</td>
<td>Mustard, relish, pickles, bullion cubes/ granules</td>
<td>Various sauces (e.g. hoisin, fish, blackbean, oyster, plum)</td>
<td>Ketchup, BBQ sauce, horseradish (shelf stable), cocktail/seafood sauce</td>
<td>Tomato based pasta sauce</td>
<td>Cream based pasta sauce</td>
<td>Dry packaged Sauce mixes</td>
<td>Mixed commercially canned, prepared foods (e.g. baked beans, spaghetti noodles and sauce, stews, soups)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Soy, steak Worcestershire sauce 3 years; hot pepper sauce 5 years</td>
<td>6 - 12 months</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>6 - 8 months</td>
<td>6 - 12 months</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>Indefinitely (may develop cloudiness)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated</td>
<td>1 - 2 days</td>
<td>3 - 4 days</td>
<td>1 - 2 days</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>1 month</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 2 years after the best before date; 5 years after manufacture date if no best before date.

THE INFORMATION IN THIS TABLE IS TO BE USED AS A GUIDE ONLY. IT WAS DEVELOPED BASED ON GENERAL KNOWLEDGE, INDUSTRY PRACTICES AND THE UNDERSTANDING THAT BEST BEFORE DATES ARE ABOUT SENSORY QUALITY.

* Assumptions: refrigerator temperatures are maintained at 0°C-4°C (food keeps fresh longer at 0°C-2°C than at 3°C-4°C); freezer temperatures are maintained at -18°C; room temperature storage is 10-25°C, dry and dark.

### Best Before Date

Is an indicator of the shelf life of a food. It is not an indicator of food safety. When stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact, the food is expected to have acceptable taste and smell at its best before date.

### Expiry Date

Is an indicator of nutritional quality. At the Expiry Date the food will have the nutritional content declared on the label if the food was stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact. Most foods have Best Before dates. Foods such as infant formulas and meal replacements will have Expiry Dates. Products should not be shared after the Expiry Date.

For more information contact Food Banks Canada at 1-877-535-0958 or info@foodbankscanada.ca | Date updated: February 2019.
## EGGS, CHEESE & DAIRY PRODUCTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>SHELL EGGS</th>
<th>LIQUID EGGS &amp; SUBSTITUTES</th>
<th>CHEESES FROM RETAIL DELI</th>
<th>HARD CHEESE COMMERCIALY PACKAGED</th>
<th>SEMI-SOFT/SOFT CHEESE COMMERCIALY PACKAGED</th>
<th>COTTAGE CHEESE</th>
<th>HARD DRY CHEESES</th>
<th>REFRIGERATED PROCESSED CHEESES</th>
<th>REFRIGERATED DAIRY-BASED DIPS</th>
<th>FERMENTED DAIRY PRODUCTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product Descriptions</strong></td>
<td>Grade A eggs in shell</td>
<td>Pasteurized eggs / egg substitutes</td>
<td>Deli packaged cheese slices and pieces</td>
<td>E.g., Cheddar, Marble, swiss, brick; block, shredded or sliced</td>
<td>E.g., Mozzarella, Camembert, Brie, Feta, blue, Gruyere, Havarti; block, shredded, sliced, crumbled</td>
<td>Cottage cheese, Ricotta cheese</td>
<td>Grated parmesan/romano sold unrefrigerated</td>
<td>Refrigerated cream cheese, Single Slices, Velveeta, Laughing Cow triangles</td>
<td>Dips made with sour cream, cream cheese commercially packaged</td>
<td>Yogurt, sour cream, kefir, commercial buttermilk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Room Temperature</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shell eggs</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasteurized eggs / egg substitutes</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deli packaged cheese slices and pieces</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., Cheddar, Marble, swiss, brick; block, shredded or sliced</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., Mozzarella, Camembert, Brie, Feta, blue, Gruyere, Havarti; block, shredded, sliced, crumbled</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage cheese, Ricotta cheese</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grated parmesan/romano sold unrefrigerated</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated cream cheese, Single Slices, Velveeta, Laughing Cow triangles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dips made with sour cream, cream cheese commercially packaged</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt, sour cream, kefir, commercial buttermilk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refrigerated</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shell eggs</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 weeks</td>
<td>1 - 2 weeks if shredded or sliced; 3 - 6 months block</td>
<td>2 week if shredded/sliced/crumbled; 1 - 2 months</td>
<td>3 - 5 days</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasteurized eggs / egg substitutes</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 weeks</td>
<td>1 - 2 weeks if shredded or sliced; 3 - 6 months block</td>
<td>2 week if shredded/sliced/crumbled; 1 - 2 months</td>
<td>3 - 5 days</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deli packaged cheese slices and pieces</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 weeks</td>
<td>1 - 2 weeks if shredded or sliced; 3 - 6 months block</td>
<td>2 week if shredded/sliced/crumbled; 1 - 2 months</td>
<td>3 - 5 days</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., Cheddar, Marble, swiss, brick; block, shredded or sliced</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 weeks</td>
<td>1 - 2 weeks if shredded or sliced; 3 - 6 months block</td>
<td>2 week if shredded/sliced/crumbled; 1 - 2 months</td>
<td>3 - 5 days</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., Mozzarella, Camembert, Brie, Feta, blue, Gruyere, Havarti; block, shredded, sliced, crumbled</td>
<td>3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 weeks</td>
<td>1 - 2 weeks if shredded or sliced; 3 - 6 months block</td>
<td>2 week if shredded/sliced/crumbled; 1 - 2 months</td>
<td>3 - 5 days</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage cheese, Ricotta cheese</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td>3 - 6 months; texture may change; cream cheese in block 2 months; cream cheese in tub freezing not recommended</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grated parmesan/romano sold unrefrigerated</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated cream cheese, Single Slices, Velveeta, Laughing Cow triangles</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dips made with sour cream, cream cheese commercially packaged</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt, sour cream, kefir, commercial buttermilk</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frozen</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shell eggs</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded/sliced; 6 - 12 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded, sliced or crumbled; 3 - 6 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pasteurized eggs / egg substitutes</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded/sliced; 6 - 12 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded, sliced or crumbled; 3 - 6 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deli packaged cheese slices and pieces</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded/sliced; 6 - 12 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded, sliced or crumbled; 3 - 6 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., Cheddar, Marble, swiss, brick; block, shredded or sliced</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded/sliced; 6 - 12 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded, sliced or crumbled; 3 - 6 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E.g., Mozzarella, Camembert, Brie, Feta, blue, Gruyere, Havarti; block, shredded, sliced, crumbled</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>12 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded/sliced; 6 - 12 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>2 - 3 months if shredded, sliced or crumbled; 3 - 6 months block; texture will change</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cottage cheese, Ricotta cheese</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td>3 - 6 months; texture may change; cream cheese in block 2 months; cream cheese in tub freezing not recommended</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grated parmesan/romano sold unrefrigerated</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td>3 - 6 months; texture may change; cream cheese in block 2 months; cream cheese in tub freezing not recommended</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated cream cheese, Single Slices, Velveeta, Laughing Cow triangles</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td>3 - 6 months; texture may change; cream cheese in block 2 months; cream cheese in tub freezing not recommended</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dips made with sour cream, cream cheese commercially packaged</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td>3 - 6 months; texture may change; cream cheese in block 2 months; cream cheese in tub freezing not recommended</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogurt, sour cream, kefir, commercial buttermilk</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td>3 - 6 months; texture may change; cream cheese in block 2 months; cream cheese in tub freezing not recommended</td>
<td>4 months, texture will change</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in this table is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.

The suitability for sharing foods should always be based on:

1. Ensuring the product has been handled safely (i.e., refrigerated products are kept at 0°C-4°C).
2. Assessing all packaging for integrity (i.e., damage, dents, creases, etc.) based on Food Banks Canada Safe Food Handling Standards.
3. Ensuring the product is at a level of quality (e.g., taste and smell) that is still worth sharing.
4. Ensuring the manufacturer’s brand will not be compromised if the product is shared.

Assumptions: refrigerator temperatures are maintained at 0°C-4°C (food keeps fresh longer at 0°C-2°C than at 3°C-4°C); freezer temperatures are maintained at -18°C; room temperature storage is 10-25°C, dry and dark.

Best Before Date is an indicator of the shelf life of a food. It is not an indicator of food safety. When stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact, the food is expected to have acceptable taste and smell at its best before date.

Expiry Date is an indicator of nutritional quality. At the Expiry Date the food will have the nutritional content declared on the label if the food was stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact. Most foods have Best Before dates. Foods such as infant formulas and meal replacements will have Expiry Dates. Products should not be shared after the Expiry Date.

For more information contact Food Banks Canada at 1-877-535-0958 or info@foodbankscanada.ca | Date updated: February 2019.
# MEAT POULTRY SEAFOOD & ALTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME FRAME PAST BEST BEFORE</th>
<th>UNCOOKED MEAT (EXCL. POULTRY)</th>
<th>UNCOOKED POULTRY</th>
<th>UNCOOKED FISH/ SHELLFISH</th>
<th>COOKED MEATS/ FISH/ SHELLFISH</th>
<th>REFRIGERATED DELI MEATS COMMERCIALY PACKAGED</th>
<th>DELI MEATS FROM RETAIL COUNTER</th>
<th>UNREFRIGERATED MEATS</th>
<th>VEGGIE BURGERS</th>
<th>TOFU/SOYBEAN CURD</th>
<th>PEANUT BUTTER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product Descriptions</td>
<td>Packaged and bulk uncooked meats, ground meats/fresh sausages</td>
<td>Packaged and bulk uncooked poultry, ground poultry/fresh poultry sausages</td>
<td>Packaged and bulk uncooked (low fat and high fat fish, shellfish)</td>
<td>Tins, commercial packages (e.g. beef, salmon, tuna, sardines, mackerel, shellfish)</td>
<td>Cooked deli meats (cold cuts), semi-dry sausage/salami, cooked sausages (e.g. hotdogs, weiners, kielbasa)</td>
<td>Cooked, sliced or chunks of deli meats (cold cuts) packaged at retail counter</td>
<td>Dry, hard meats (e.g. dry salami, pepperoni and jerky)</td>
<td>Veggie burgers (frozen)</td>
<td>Fresh tofu/ soybean curd</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room Temperature</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>1 - 2 years</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td>4 - 6 weeks</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Less than 2 hours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refrigerated</td>
<td>3-5 days; ground meats 1-2 days; bacon 1 week</td>
<td>1 - 2 days</td>
<td>1 - 2 days</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>7 - 10 day</td>
<td>3 - 5 days</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>3 - 5 days</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frozen</td>
<td>Beef 9 - 12 months; pork, ham 6 - 9 months; lamb 6 - 9 months; veal 4 - 6 months; ground meat 3 - 4 months; sausages and bacon 1 - 2 months</td>
<td>Whole poultry 12 months; pieces 6-12 months; ground 3-4 months; sausages and bacon 1-2 months</td>
<td>Low fat fish (cod, tilapia) 6 - 8 months; high fat fish (salmon, char, mackerel) 2 - 4 months; shellfish 3 - 4 months</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>2 - 3 months</td>
<td>2 - 3 months</td>
<td>9 - 12 months</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>3 - 5 months</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The information in this table is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.

The suitability for sharing foods should always be based on:

1) Ensuring the product has been handled safely (i.e., refrigerated products are kept at 0°C-4°C).
2) Assessing all packaging for integrity (i.e., damage, dents, creases, etc.) based on Food Banks Canada Safe Food Handling Standards.
3) Ensuring the product is at a level of quality (e.g., taste and smell) that is still worth sharing.
4) Ensuring the manufacturer’s brand will not be compromised if the product is shared.

**Best Before Date** is an indicator of the shelf life of a food. It is not an indicator of food safety. When stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact, the food is expected to have acceptable taste and smell at its best before date.

**Expiry Date** is an indicator of nutritional quality. At the Expiry Date the food will have the nutritional content declared on the label if the food was stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact. Most foods have Best Before dates. Foods such as infant formulas and meal replacements will have Expiry Dates. Products should not be shared after the Expiry Date.

For more information contact Food Banks Canada at 1-877-535-0958 or info@foodbankscanada.ca | Date updated: February 2019.
# BABY FOOD & MEAL REPLACEMENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME FRAME</th>
<th>INFANT FORMULA</th>
<th>BABY AND TODDLER FOOD</th>
<th>BABY AND TODDLER FOOD</th>
<th>ADULT MEAL REPLACEMENTS</th>
<th>ADULT MEAL REPLACEMENTS</th>
<th>MEAL/ENERGY SUPPLEMENTS</th>
<th>MEAL/ENERGY SUPPLEMENTS</th>
<th>MEAL/ENERGY SUPPLEMENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Product Descriptions</strong></td>
<td>All Infant Formula - complete meals for infants</td>
<td>Cereal mix (dry mix)</td>
<td>Vegetable/fruit puree, mixed foods (prepared in jars, pouches, etc.)</td>
<td>Complete meal replacement liquid (E.g. Ensure, Boost)</td>
<td>Complete meal replacement powders</td>
<td>Meal substitutes/ supplements (e.g. breakfast drinks)</td>
<td>Breakfast/ lunch/energy bars (e.g. Clif)</td>
<td>Dry or chewy granola and cereal bars (e.g. Quaker, Nature Valley, Kind)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Room Temperature</strong></td>
<td>Do not distribute past expiry date</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>Do not distribute past expiry date</td>
<td>Do not distribute past expiry date</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>6 months</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Refrigerated</strong></td>
<td>Do not distribute past expiry date</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Do not distribute past expiry date</td>
<td>Do not distribute past expiry date</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Frozen</strong></td>
<td>Do not distribute past expiry date</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>Do not distribute past expiry date</td>
<td>Do not distribute past expiry date</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Products with Expiry Dates should not be shared past the date on the packaging.

The information in this table is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.

The suitability for sharing foods should always be based on:

1) Ensuring the product has been handled safely (i.e., refrigerated products are kept at 0°C-4°C).
2) Assessing all packaging for integrity (i.e., damage, dents, creases, etc.) based on Food Banks Canada Safe Food Handling Standards.
3) Ensuring the product is at a level of quality (e.g., taste and smell) that is still worth sharing.
4) Ensuring the manufacturer's brand will not be compromised if the product is shared.

**Assumptions:** refrigerator temperatures are maintained at 0°C-4°C (food keeps fresh longer at 0°C-2°C than at 3°C-4°C); freezer temperatures are maintained at -18°C; room temperature storage is 10-25°C, dry and dark.

**Best Before Date** is an indicator of the shelf life of a food. It is not an indicator of food safety. When stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact, the food is expected to have acceptable taste and smell at its best before date.

**Expiry Date** is an indicator of nutritional quality. At the Expiry Date the food will have the nutritional content declared on the label if the food was stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact. Most foods have Best Before dates. Foods such as infant formulas and meal replacements will have Expiry Dates. Products should not be shared after the Expiry Date.

For more information contact Food Banks Canada at 1-877-535-0958 or info@foodbankscanada.ca | Date updated: February 2019.
MISCELLANEOUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product Descriptions</th>
<th>1 month</th>
<th>1 - 2 months</th>
<th>1 year</th>
<th>1 - 2 years</th>
<th>Indefinitely (keep moisture out)</th>
<th>12 months: Natural style 2 - 3 months</th>
<th>2 - 4 weeks</th>
<th>2 months</th>
<th>6 months</th>
<th>2 years</th>
<th>12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pudding cups (non-refrigerated)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dry pudding mix</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fruit jams and jellies, marmalade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutella</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugar and honey (unpasteurize and pasteurized; creamed, liquid, crystallized)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peanut Butter; Natural peanut butter (no hydrogenated oils) and nut butters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelled nuts and seeds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potato chips, corn chips, nachos*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pretzels, popcorn (prepared)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popcorn kernels unpopped</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Popcorn kernels in microwaveable packets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TIME FRAME PAST BEST BEFORE

Room Temperature

Refrigerated

Frozen

The information in this table is to be used as a guide only. It was developed based on general knowledge, industry practices and the understanding that best before dates are about sensory quality.

The suitability for sharing foods should always be based on:

1) Ensuring the product has been handled safely (i.e., refrigerated products are kept at 0°C-4°C).
2) Assessing all packaging for integrity (i.e., damage, dents, creases, etc.) based on Food Banks Canada Safe Food Handling Standards.
3) Ensuring the product is at a level of quality (e.g., taste and smell) that is still worth sharing.
4) Ensuring the manufacturer’s brand will not be compromised if the product is shared.

Best Before Date is an indicator of the shelf life of a food. It is not an indicator of food safety. When stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact, the food is expected to have acceptable taste and smell at its best before date.

Expiry Date is an indicator of nutritional quality. At the Expiry Date the food will have the nutritional content declared on the label if the food was stored under appropriate conditions and the packaging is intact. Most foods have Best Before dates. Foods such as infant formulas and meal replacements will have Expiry Dates. Products should not be shared after the Expiry Date.

Assumptions: refrigerator temperatures are maintained at 0°C-4°C (food keeps fresh longer at 0°C-2°C than at 3°C-4°C); freezer temperatures are maintained at -18°C; room temperature storage is 10-25°C, dry and dark.

For more information contact Food Banks Canada at 1-877-535-0958 or info@foodbankscanada.ca | Date updated: February 2019.
Are you subscribed to the Fork and Spoon?

At communications@foodbankscanada.ca and include your first and last name with your email and organization name.

The Fork and Spoon is a monthly newsletter that contains important information about grants, programs, best practices and food bankers.

Don’t miss out! Sign up today!