

Food Packaging Date Labels; Why the Confusion



What you Need to Know

Packaged foods will contain dates on labels

- Some of the phrases include "Best Before", "Use by", "Best if used by"
- It is very important to follow any packaged dates on infant formula
- Country laws require date labelling on food packages
- Often labels will show when food as either produced or packaged
- Manufacturers will apply dates to packages to inform the consumer and retailer when the food is at its best with respect to quality and nutrition.



Avoid food waste

- Dates are used as a guide to illustrate freshness and maximum quality within the date range
- Eat foods within the specified date range
- Don't rely exclusively on date labels as a sign of quality and freshness
 - ✗ Foods not stored within their proper temperature range may deteriorate and spoil quicker
 - ✗ Changes in colour, consistency, smell may indicate premature spoilage

Methods to Extend Shelf Life

- ✓ Freezing is a good alternative to extend shelf life of perishable foods
- ✓ You can utilize credible applications in the App Store (Android and Apple) that provides useful information on the shelf life of refrigerated and frozen foods. The United States Department of Agriculture USDA application called "Foodkeeper" is one such application.
- ✓ Modified atmosphere packaging – the removal of oxygen or replacing oxygen environments in packaging with Nitrogen gas are technologies used to extend shelf life.

