

Decoding Food Product Dates

“Sell-By” Date

Tells the store how long a food product should be displayed on the shelves as being for sale. Buy the product before that date is reached to ensure adequate storage time once purchased



“Best if Used By” or “Before” Date

A date that is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase-by or food safety date.



“Use By” Date

The last date recommended for product use while at peak quality. The date is determined by the food manufacturer and does not indicate spoilage or safety.

“Closed” or “Coded” Date

A packing number for use by the food manufacturer.

Source: USDA Food Safety & Inspection Service



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