



The Health & Wellness Coalition Healthy Eating Committee is focusing on Food Waste to Celebrate Food Day 2016



Food Day inspires Americans to change their diets and our food policies. Every October 24, thousands of events all around the country bring Americans together to celebrate and enjoy real food and to push for improved food policies.

This four part newsletter series will feature the following themes:

1. Defining the issue - week one
- 2. Sell by/Use by, what is food waste? - week two**
3. What can you do to reduce food waste? - week three
4. What is being done in the community? - week four

What do those dates mean?

"Sell by" date: Tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before that date.

"Best if used by (or before)" date: Recommended for best flavor or quality. It is NOT a purchase or safety date.

"Use by" date: The last date recommended by the manufacturer for the use of the product while at peak quality. *Note that these dates generally refer to food quality, rather than safety. However, they can give a general idea of how long the food has been in the market.

[Click here](#) for the full report by K-State Research and Extension.

[Click here](#) for more information on Food Product Dating from the United States Department of Agriculture.



Safe Food Handling

The most important thing consumers can do to impact the length of time they can safely keep and use food is to handle it properly.

- Purchase the product before the date expires.
- If perishable, take the food home immediately after purchase and refrigerate it promptly. Freeze it if you can't use it within times recommended on [this chart](#).
- Once a perishable product is frozen, it doesn't matter if the date expires because foods kept frozen continuously are safe indefinitely.
- Follow handling recommendations on product.



If in Doubt, Throw it Out

If the product does have visible mold, off odors, the can is bulging, or other

similar signs, this spoilage could be a sign that dangerous microorganisms may also be present, so with such products, use the "If in doubt, throw it out" rule.

Refrigerator Strategies: Keeping Food Safe

In addition to keeping the temperature in your fridge at 40 °F, you can take additional steps to make sure your refrigerated foods stay as safe as possible.

- Avoid "Overpacking." Cold air must circulate around refrigerated foods to keep them properly chilled.
- Wipe Up Spills Immediately. In addition to helping reduce the growth of the Listeria bacteria (which can grow at refrigerated temperatures), getting rid of spills - especially drips from thawing meats - will help prevent "cross-contamination," where bacteria from one food spread to another.
- Keep It Covered. Store refrigerated foods in covered containers or sealed storage bags, and check leftovers daily for spoilage.
- Clean The Fridge Out Frequently. Make this task part of your kitchen cleaning routine!



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