

# FOOD DATE LABELS

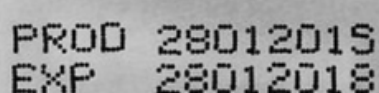
## EXPLAINED

There are no universally accepted descriptions for open-dating in the US. Food date labeling is *not required* by federal law, except for baby formula. Food date labels are created for consumer and manufacturer use.

### Types of Food Date Labels

#### 1. CLOSED DATING

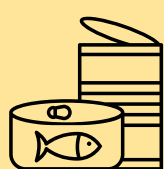
A code of letters and numbers to identify date and **time of production** (batch number/tracking), used for shelf stable items such as canned goods.



PROD 28012018  
EXP 28012018

#### 2. OPEN DATING

A calendar date for **best quality use**, mostly used with eggs, meat, and poultry such as:



##### “BEST IF USED BY/BEFORE”

When a product is of best flavor/quality. Not a purchase or safety date.



##### “FREEZE-BY”

When a product should be frozen to maintain peak quality. Not a purchase or safety date.

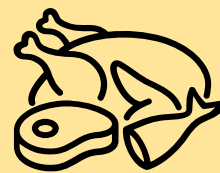
##### “USE-BY”

Last date recommended for use while at peak quality. Not a safety date, except for infant formula.



##### “SELL-BY”

How long to keep the product for sale at the store. Used for inventory. Not a safety date.



### EGGS



Usually have “sell-by” or “expiration” labels. Eggs with USDA grade shield must have pack date.



**DO NOT CONSUME 30 DAYS FROM PACK DATE**

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## FOOD SAFETY

### Types of Food Bacteria

1. **Pathogenic-**  
causes foodborne  
illness

2. **Spoilage-** causes food  
to deteriorate and  
develop unpleasant  
flavors or odor

**Note:** change in color of meat is not necessarily an indicator of food spoilage

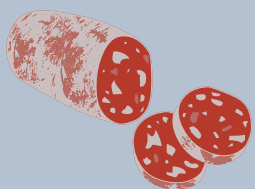
## Can I cut the mold off?



OK to cut mold off:



**Hard Cheese**



**Salami**



**Firm Fruits**

(apples, citrus,  
pears, peaches)



**Firm vegetables**

(carrots, potatoes,  
beets, winter  
squash)

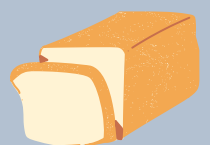
Throw out:



**Soft Cheeses**



**Bread**



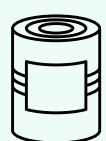
**Yogurt/sour  
cream**



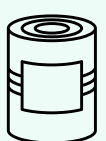
**Pasta sauces**



**Jams/jellies**



### CANNED GOODS



Must have a code or date of canning (closed dating).

**DISCARD CANS THAT ARE RUSTED, DEEPLY DENTED, OR SWOLLEN.**

**High acid cans**  
(tomatoes, fruits, etc.)

Last 12-18 months after date

**Low acid cans**  
(meats, vegetables, etc.)

Last 3-5 years after date