

UNDERSTANDING EXPIRATION DATES

Date on products is “peak freshness”, not a definite date for product safety or quality

ICA follows the guidelines recommended by the USDA Food and Safety Inspection Service

Category	Product(s)	Typical Lifespan (Quality Related)
Baby Food / Formula / Infant Cereal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formula • Jar / Packaged Wet Foods • Dry Cereal 	<i>Do not use after date on the container</i>
Bakery Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bread • Rolls • Sweets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Use up to 1 week after date on the package</i> • <i>Unpreserved / Organic breads may mold within 3-4 days of date</i>
Boxed Dinners (Dry)		<i>Indefinite</i>
Baking Mixes	Cake, Muffin, Bread, Etc.	<i>Use 6 months after date on the package</i>
Rice / Pasta Products (Dry)		<i>Up to 3 years after the date on the package</i>
Cereals, Chips, and Crackers		<i>Use 6 months to 2 years after date on the package</i>
Pouches	Tuna, Wet Ingredients, Etc.	<i>Use 6 months after date on the package (unopened)</i>
Condiments / Salad Dressings	Ketchup, Mustard, Mayo, Etc.	<i>Indefinite</i>
Glass and Plastic Jars		<i>Use 2-5 years after date on the package (airtight, sealed or unopened)</i>
Canned Products	High Acid: Fruit, fruit juice, tomato products, and pickled foods	<i>Use 12-18 months after date on the package</i>
	Low Acid: Canned meat/poultry/fish, soup (not tomato), vegetable (not tomato), and pasta products	<i>Use 2-5 years after date on the package</i>

USDA Food and Safety Inspection Service - see www.fsis.usda.gov (food safety education section) for more information.

“‘Open Dating’ (use of a calendar date as opposed to a code) on a food product is a date stamped on a product’s package to help the store determine how long to display the product for sale. It can also help the purchaser to know the time limit to purchase or use the product at its best quality. It is not a safety date.”