



Home Food Preservation



## Storing Commercially Packaged Foods At Home

Food packaging dates are often misunderstood. Except for infant formula, packaged foods do not have expiration dates in the U.S. Expiration dates refer to the safety of food, while other packaging dates are related to the quality or freshness of food. Proper food storage helps to preserve the safety of food by preventing foodborne illnesses caused by harmful microorganisms and preserves the quality of food by slowing the growth of spoilage microorganisms. Regularly clean storage areas and refrigerators. Use a thermometer to make sure the refrigerator is maintaining 41°F or cooler.

Shelf-Stable Packaged Foods		Refrigerated Packaged Foods	
Food	Storage	Food	Storage
<b>Infant formula</b>	Discard by "use by" date for safety. Degradation of nutrients over time may pose a risk to infant health as this may be their only source of nutrition. Keep cool and dry.	<b>Canned biscuits and rolls, cookie dough</b>	Store in coolest part of refrigerator. Use "use by" date for best quality.
<b>Flour, sugar, spices, tea, coffee, bouillon, chocolate, gelatin, pasta, rice, cereal, oil, vinegar</b>	Keep tightly closed, cool and dry. Refrigeration is not necessary. Follow "use by" dates for best quality.	<b>Cream cheese, sliced cheese, dips, unopened hot dogs, sour cream, unopened lunch meat, vacuum-packed dinners</b>	Store in the coolest part of refrigerator. To reduce the risk of <i>Listeria</i> a bacteria that causes the foodborne illness listeriosis use within 2 weeks. Follow package instructions once opened.
<b>Jam, jellies, salad dressing, syrups, mayo, condiments</b>	Keep cool and dry. Refrigerating after opening will help extend quality.	<b>Bacon, breakfast links and patties</b>	Store in coolest part of refrigerator use in 7 days.
<b>Canned Foods</b>		<b>Egg substitute - unopened</b>	Store in coolest part of refrigerator and use within 10 days. Follow package instructions once opened.
Food	Storage	<b>Types of Food Package Dates</b>	
<b>Commercially canned food</b>	Avoid sharply dented cans the seal may be compromised leaving the contents unsafe. Keep in a cool and dry location. May be safely stored indefinitely. Use "best by" dates for best quality.	<b>Sell By</b>	Not safety data, it tells the store how long to display the product
<b>Home-canned foods</b>	Safe indefinitely if tested recipe was used. Keep cool and dry, best quality if used within 12 months.	<b>Best if Used By/ Before</b>	Indicates when the food will be of best flavor or quality
		<b>Use By</b>	Last date of peak quality
		<b>Closed or coded dates</b>	Packing numbers used by the manufacturer