

These are recommendations only. Always inspect products and discard if signs of spoilage appear.

## For Food Safety Sake: Keep or Toss? Distributing and Using Donated Products

| Category                                  | Product(s)   | Storage and Usage Guidelines   |
|---|--|--|
| Baby Food                                 | Moist food   | Do not use after date on container. Refrigerate after opening. Use within 3 days once opened.  |
|   | Dry infant cereal  | Do not distribute or use after date on container. Store in a cool, dry location.   |
|   | Infant formula – wet or dry                                    | Do not distribute or use after date on container. Store in a sealed container. Keep liquid formula refrigerated after opening.   |
| Bakery Items                              | Breads, rolls, cakes, Danishes, cookies                        | Use for up to 1 week after date on package. Discard if mold appears.   |
| Canned Foods (includes trays and pouches) | Canned fruits, tomato products, and pickled foods              | Use for up to 2 years past the date marked on the product. Discard cans if deeply dented, or any tears or rips in flexible packages or foil tops.*                         |
|   | Canned meat, poultry, fish, soup, vegetables, and pasta        | Use for up to 2 years past the date marked on the product. Refrigerate after opening. Discard cans if deeply dented, or any tears or rips in flexible packaging or trays.* |
| Cereals, Chips and Crackers               |  | Use for up to 2 years past date marked on package. Product may stale before then.  |
| Condiments                                | Ketchup, mustard, mayo   | Distribute up to 2 years past date. Discard discolored or separation has occurred. Refrigerate after opening.  |
| Cream-filled Pastries & Cream Pies        | Pastries or pies with whipped cream topping or custard filling | Keep refrigerated. Safe to distribute up to 5 days past date on package if kept refrigerated.  |
| Dry Mixes                                 | Soup, meal-in-a-box (i.e. meal helper)                         | Distribute up to 2 years past date marked.   |
|   | Potato, pudding, flavored rice or pasta, seasonings            | Distribute 6 months past date on package. Store in a cool, dry location.   |
| Jars                                      | Glass  | Use for up to 2 years past date on container. Refrigerate after opening. EXCEPTION for juice (see below).  |
|   | Plastic  | Use for up to 2 years past date on package. Refrigerate after opening. EXCEPTION for juice (see below).  |
| Juice                                     | Jars, cans or juice boxes                                      | Distribute up to 6 months past date on package. Refrigerate after opening.   |
| Mixes (bakery)                            | Cake, muffin, cookie, pancake                                  | Distribute up to 6 months after date on package. Store in a cool, dry place.   |
| Flour                                     | Wheat, rice, soy   | Distribute up to 1 year past date on package. Store in a cool, dry place. Discard if signs of insect infestation appear.   |
| Rice & Pasta                              | Unflavored   | Distribute up to 2 years past date on package.   |
| Whole Grains                              | Whole wheat flour, corn meal, oatmeal                          | Distribute whole wheat products up to 6 months past date; other whole-grains up to 2 years. Store in a cool, dry place.  |
| Salad Dressing                            |  | Distribute up to 2 years past date on package. Refrigerate after opening. Once opened, use within 2 months.  |

\***Deep dents** have sharp edges and are large enough to rest a finger in the dent. Discard cans with deep dents. Discard cans that are bulging or leaking. Discard cans with heavy rust (pitting).

**“Sell by”** – Quality date found on eggs, milk and lunch meat. Distribute by this date, with time still left for storage and use at home.

**“Use by or Best by”** – Quality date found on canned food and cereal. Except for baby food, product may be safely used and distributed well past this date.

**“Expiration date”** – Quality date on infant formula and vitamins. Do not distribute infant formula or vitamins past date.

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## A Guide to Refrigerated or Frozen Products

| Category                  | Product(s)   | Storage & Usage Guidelines   |
|---------------------------|--|--|
| Butter & Margarine        |  | Refrigerate or freeze. If kept cold, may be edible for up to 3 months after product date.  |
| Cheese                    | <b>Soft</b> (cottage, string, feta, cheese spread) | Distribute up to 1 week past date; use within 3 days. Keep refrigerated.   |
|                           | Cream cheese (spread)                              | Distribute up to 2 weeks past date; use within 7 days. Refrigerate. Discard if moldy.  |
|                           | <b>Hard</b> (Cheddar, parmesan)                    | Good almost indefinitely. Keep refrigerated. Discard if moldy.   |
|                           | <b>Medium</b> (muenster, brick, mozzarella)        | If kept cold, can be distributed for many months past the date. Keep refrigerated. Discard if moldy.                                   |
| Eggs                      | Washed, from a licensed processor, dated           | Distribute up to 3-5 weeks past date on carton; use within 2 weeks. Keep refrigerated.   |
| Milk                      | Fluid milk   | Keep refrigerated. Can be safely consumed up to 5 days past product date.  |
|                           | Canned or boxed milk                               | Store unopened up to 1 year past date on package. Refrigerate once opened. Use within 7 days.  |
| Soft Desserts             | Puddings, cheese cake                              | Distribute up to 1 week past date; use within 3 days. Keep refrigerated.   |
| Yogurt & Sour Cream       | Yogurt, smoothies, sour cream                      | Distribute up to 14 days past the date on the container; use within 7 days. Keep refrigerated.   |
| Casseroles                |  | Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 3 days, or freeze. Reheat thoroughly.   |
| Salads, prepared          | Egg, tuna, chicken                                 | Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 3-5 days.   |
| Sandwiches                |  | Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 3 days.   |
| Soups & Stews             |  | Keep refrigerated. Use/distribute within 3 days, or freeze. Reheat thoroughly.   |
| Poultry (chicken, turkey) | Fresh (uncooked)                                   | Cook or freeze within 2 days. Keep cold.   |
|                           | Cooked   | Use within 5 days. Keep cold.  |
| Ground Meat               | Beef, chicken, turkey, pork, lamb                  | Cook or freeze within 2 days. Once cooked, use within 5 days. Keep cold.   |
| Meat (beef, pork, lamb)   | Fresh (uncooked)                                   | Cook or freeze within 3-5 days. Keep cold.   |
|                           | Cooked   | Use within 5 days. Keep cold.  |
| Ham                       | 'Cook Before Eating'                               | Cook or freeze within 7 days. Once cooked, use within 2 weeks.   |
|                           | Canned (marked 'Keep Refrigerated')                | Store for up to 9 months in the refrigerator. Once cooked, use within 2 weeks.   |
| Lunch Meat                | Deli sliced  | Use within 2 days or freeze. Keep refrigerated.  |
|                           | Pre-packaged (includes bacon and hot dogs)         | Distribute up to 2 weeks past 'Sell By' date. Once opened, use or freeze within 2 days. Bacon must be thoroughly cooked before eating. |
| Sausage                   | Fresh (uncooked)                                   | Cook or freeze within 2 days. Keep cold.   |
|                           | Cooked   | Use or freeze within 2 days of opening.  |
|                           | Hard/dry (summer sausage)                          | Shelf stable. Store for 3 months on pantry shelf.  |

B. Ingham. 25 June 2012