

# SMART STRATEGY: Make a Shopping List with Meals in Mind



**TOO GOOD  
TO WASTE**

- Think about how many meals you'll eat at home this week and how long before your next shopping trip.
- Next to fresh items on the list, note the quantity you need or number of meals you're buying for.
- Shop your kitchen first and note items you already have.
- Download copies of this list at: [www.recyclefood.com](http://www.recyclefood.com)

**FOOD ITEM**

**AMOUNT NEEDED**

**ALREADY HAVE**

Salad greens

Lunch for a week

Enough for one lunch

2% milk

Gallon

None



# "Sell-by," "best-by," "use-by:"

## What do food date labels really mean?

### With one exception, it's not about food safety.

The dates on food labels can be confusing and are commonly misinterpreted, leading consumers to discard products with weeks of good shelf life remaining. And all that adds up to significant amounts of wasted money and resources, with serious impacts to the environment.

With the exception of infant formula, requiring expiration, "use by" or "best before" product dating is at the discretion of the manufacturer. Food and Drug Administration laws only require manufacturers to produce food that is wholesome and fit for consumption.



### Here's a short summary of what food product dates mean:

#### Sell-By date

Tells the store how long to display the product for sale. You should buy the product before the date expires. But you can still store it at home for some time beyond that date, as long as you follow safe storage procedures (see links below for shelf life information).

#### Best if Used By (or Before) date

Date is recommended for best flavor or quality. It is not a purchase or safety date.

#### Use-By date

The last date recommended for the use of the product while at peak quality. "Use-by" dates usually refer to best quality and are not safety dates. Even if the date expires during home storage, a product should be safe, wholesome and of good quality if handled properly.

#### Closed or coded dates

Packing numbers for use by the manufacturer.

### Wondering about the shelf life of a particular food or drink?

Check out [StillTasty.com](http://StillTasty.com) or [EatByDate.com](http://EatByDate.com), and search by item.

### For more information on product dating:

- [www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/Transparency/Basics/ucm210073.htm](http://www.fda.gov/AboutFDA/Transparency/Basics/ucm210073.htm)
- [www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/wps/portal/fsis/topics/food-safety-education)