

BL'S LITTLE FREE PANTRIES CODE OF CONDUCT

This is to certify that being a Volunteer / Helper of BL's Little Free Pantries, free food giveaways and all Programs, Agencies, Associates as well as all Officiated programs through Ladybug Creations by BL, I understand fully that any information, communication, written, verbal or in another other form obtained during the performance of my duties, must remain confidential.

This includes all information regarding other Volunteers / Helpers, Patrons, Family and any other Associate Organization. As well this includes any other information otherwise marked or known to be confidential.

I understand that any unauthorized release or carelessness in the handling of the confidential information is considered a Breach of Duty to maintain confidentiality.

Administers of the Volunteer Page can and will remove Volunteers / Helpers for any breach of confidentiality.

How Does This Mini Pantry Work?

This mini pantry is an easy way for neighbors to help neighbors who need food, hygiene, or paper items.

Even though its home is on this property, **this mini pantry belongs to all of us** Please take care of it and the space around it. Tidy the mini pantry if it needs it. If you can, clean up spills, and please don't litter.

Give what you can by placing food, hygiene, or paper items inside the mini pantry. Give what you would want to receive. An easy rule of thumb: buy extra of what you buy your household. No gift is too small. A single can of green beans can help. Items should be unexpired and in good condition.

Take what you need. If you find items inside and you need them, take them and know we care about you. Please remember the mini pantry belongs to all of us and take only those items you need, trusting the mini pantry will be here for you again.

IS THIS FOOD EXPIRED?

UNDERSTANDING DATE LABELS

The dates that food companies put on packages are not regulated and do not mean that the food is unsafe to eat, except in the case of baby formula. Most foods are still tasty and nutritious after the date has passed. **Not sure if food is spoiled? Check for off odor, flavor or texture.**

"BEST BY" OR "BEST IF USED BY" DATE

This date tells you when the food will have the **best flavor**.
It is **still safe to eat** past this date.

"USE BY" OR "EXPIRATION" DATE

This is the last date that the product will be at its **peak quality**.
It is **still safe to eat** past this date (except for baby formula).

"PACKING/MANUFACTURING" DATE

This is the date used by manufacturers for tracking.
It is not an expiration date - it is not related to food quality or safety.

"SELL BY" DATE

This tells the store how long to display the product for sale.
It is **still safe to eat** past this date.

GOOD FOR UP TO ONE YEAR AFTER THE DATE:

- Packaged food like cereal, pasta, dried beans, and baking mixes
- Frozen foods
- Canned goods including soup, condiments, meat, fruit, and vegetables

GOOD FOR UP TO 30 DAYS AFTER THE DATE:

- Butter
- Cheese
- Eggs

GOOD FOR UP TO SEVEN DAYS AFTER THE DATE:

- Milk
- Yogurt
- Cream Cheese

Questions? Contact us at 215-223-2220 or info@sharefoodprogram.org.



Refrigerated Foods – Shelf Life After Code

PRODUCT	REFRIGERATED	FROZEN
BEVERAGES, FRUIT		
Juice in cartons, fruit drinks, punch	3 weeks, unopened; 7-10 days open	8-12 months
DAIRY PRODUCTS		
Butter	1-3 months	6-9 months
Buttermilk	1-2 weeks	3 months
Cheese, hard (such as cheddar, swiss, block parmesan)	6 months unopened; 3-4 weeks opened	6 months
Parmesan, shredded	1 month opened	3-4 months
Shredded cheddar, mozzarella, etc.	1 month	3-4 months
Cheese, processed slices	1-2 months	Doesn't freeze well
Cheese, soft (such as Brie, Bel Paese)	1 week	6 months
Cottage cheese, ricotta	1 week	Doesn't freeze well
Cream cheese	2 weeks	Doesn't freeze well
Cream, whipping, ultrapasteurized	1 month	Do not freeze
Whipped, sweetened	1 day	1-2 months
Aerosol can, real whipped cream	3-4 weeks	Do not freeze
Aerosol can, nondairy topping	3 months	Do not freeze
Cream, half-and-half	3-4 days	4 months
Dips, sour cream based	2 weeks	Do not freeze
Egg substitutes, liquid		
unopened	10 days	Do not freeze
opened	3 days	
Eggnog, commercial	3-5 days	6 months
Eggs, in shell	3-5 weeks	Do not freeze
raw whites, yolks*	2-4 days	12 months
hard cooked	1 week	Doesn't freeze well
Kefir (fermented milk)	1 week after date; opened 1-2 days	Do not freeze
Margarine	6 months	12 months
Milk, plain or flavored	1 week	3 months
Pudding	Package date; 2 days after opening	Do not freeze
Sour cream	7-21 days	Doesn't freeze well
Yogurt	7-14 days	1-2 months
DOUGH		
Tube cans of biscuits, rolls, pizza dough, etc.	Use-by date	Do not freeze
Ready-to-bake pie crust	Use-by date	2 months
Cookie dough	Use by date, unopened or opened	2 months
PASTA, fresh	1-2 days or use-by date on package	2 months
PESTO or SALSA	Date on carton; 3 days after opening	1-2 months
SOY PRODUCTS		
Soy or rice beverage, refrigerated	7-10 days	Do not freeze
Tofu	1 week or package date	5 months

Refrigerated Foods — Shelf Life After Coded

MEAT, POULTRY & FISH	REFRIGERATED	FROZEN
FISH		
Lean fish (cod, flounder, haddock, halibut, sole, etc.)	1-2 days	6-8 months
Lean fish (pollock, ocean perch, rockfish, sea trout)	1-2 days	4 months
Fatty fish (bluefish, mackerel, mullet, salmon, tuna, etc.)	1-2 days	2-3 months
Caviar, fresh, in jar	1-4 weeks; 2 days open	Doesn't freeze well
Cooked fish, all	3-4 days	1-2 months
Surimi seafood	3-4 days or package date	9 months
SHELLFISH		
Shrimp, scallops, crayfish, squid	1-2 days	3-6 months
Shucked clams, mussels and oysters	1-2 days	3-4 months
Crab meat, fresh	1-2 days	4 months
Crab meat, pasteurized	6 months unopened; 3-5 days, opened	4 months
Crab legs, king, dungeness, snow	5 days	9-12 months
Live clams, mussels, crab and oysters	1-2 days	2-3 months
Live lobsters	1-2 days	2-3 months
Lobster tails	1-2 days	6 months
Cooked shellfish, all	3-4 days	3 months
SMOKED FISH		
Herring	3-4 days	2 months
Salmon, whitefish, cold-smoked	5-8 days	2 months
Salmon, whitefish, hot smoked	14 days or date on vacuum pkg	6 months in vacuum pkg
MEAT, FRESH		
Beef, lamb, pork or veal chops, steaks, roasts	3-5 days	4-12 months
Ground meat	1-2 days	3-4 months
Variety meats (liver, tongue, chitterlings, etc.)	1-2 days	3-4 months
Cooked meats (after home cooking)	3-4 days	2-3 months
MEAT, SMOKED OR PROCESSED		
Bacon	1 week	1 month
Comed beef, in pouch with pickling juices	5-7 days	1 month
Ham, canned ("keep refrigerated" label)	6-9 months	Do not freeze
Ham, fully cooked, whole	1 week	1-2 months
Ham, fully cooked, slices or half	3-4 days	1-2 months
Ham, cook before eating	1 week	1-2 months
Hot dogs, sealed in package	2 weeks	1-2 months
Hot dogs, after opening	1 week	1-2 months
Lunch meats, sealed in package	2 weeks	1-2 months
Lunch meats, after opening	3-5 days	1-2 months
Sausage, raw, bulk type	1-2 days	1-2 months
Sausage, smoked links, patties	1 week	1-2 months
Sausage, hard, dry (pepperoni), sliced	2-3 weeks	1-2 months
POULTRY, FRESH		
Chicken or turkey, whole	1-2 days	12 months
Chicken or turkey, parts	1-2 days	9 months
Duckling or goose, whole	1-2 days	6 months
Giblets	1-2 days	3-4 months
POULTRY, COOKED or PROCESSED		
Chicken nuggets, patties	1-2 days	1-3 months
Cooked poultry dishes	3-4 days	4-6 months
Fried chicken	3-4 days	4 months
Ground turkey or chicken	1-2 days	3-4 months
Lunch meats, sealed in package	2 weeks	1-2 months
Lunch meats, after opening	3-5 days	1-2 months
Pieces covered with broth or gravy	1-2 days	6 months
Rotisserie chicken	3-4 days	4 months

Fresh fruits and vegetables

FRUITS	SHELF	REFRIGERATOR	FREEZER
Apples	1-2 days	3 weeks	Cooked, 8 months
Apricots	Until ripe	2-3 days	Do not freeze
Avocados	Until ripe	3-4 days	Do not freeze
Bananas	Until ripe	2 days, skin will blacken	Whole peeled, 1 month
Berries, cherries		1-2 days	4 months
Citrus Fruit	10 days	1-2 weeks	Do not freeze
Coconuts, fresh	1 week	2-3 weeks	Shredded, 6 months
Grapes	1 day	1 week	Whole, 1 month
Kiwi Fruit	Until ripe	3-4 days	Do not freeze
Melons	1-2 days	3-4 days	Balls, 1 month
Papaya, mango	3-5 days	1 week	Do not freeze
Peaches, nectarines	Until ripe	3-4 days	Sliced, lemon juice & sugar, 2 months
Pears, Plums	3-5 days	3-4 days	Do not freeze
VEGETABLES	SHELF	RAW, REFRIG.	FROZEN*
Artichokes, whole	1-2 days	1-2 weeks	Do not freeze
Asparagus		3-4 days	8 months
Beans, green or wax		3-4 days	8 months
Beets	1 day	7-10 days	6-8 months
Bok choy		2-3 days	10-12 months
Broccoli, raab, rapini		3-5 days	10-12 months
Brussels sprouts		3-5 days	10-12 months
Cauliflower		3-5 days	10-12 months
Cabbage		1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Carrots, parsnips		3 weeks	10-12 months
Celery		1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Corn on the cob		1-2 days	8 months
Cucumbers		4-5 days	Do not freeze
Eggplant	1 day	3-4 days	6-8 months
Garlic	1 month	1-2 weeks	1 month
Ginger Root	1-2 days	1-2 weeks	1 month
Greens		1-2 days	10-12 months
Herbs, fresh		7-10 days	1-2 months
Leeks		1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Lettuce, iceberg		1-2 weeks	Do not freeze
Lettuce, leaf		3-7 days	Do not freeze
Mushrooms		2-3 days	10-12 months
Okra		2-3 days	10-12 months
Onions, dry	2-3 weeks	2 months	10-12 months
Spring or green		1-2 weeks	10-12 months
Parsley, cilantro		1 week	1-2 months
Peppers, bell or chile		4-5 days	6-8 months
Potatoes	1-2 months	1-2 weeks	Cooked and mashed, 10-12 months
Radishes		10-14 days	Do not freeze
Rutabagas	1 week	2 weeks	8-10 months
Spinach		1-2 days	10-12 months
Squash, summer		4-5 days	10-12 months
winter	1 week	2 weeks	10-12 months
Turnips		2 weeks	8-10 months
Tomatoes	Until ripe	2-3 days	2 months

Frozen food – Shelf Life After Coded Date

FROZEN ITEMS	FREEZER	REFRIGERATOR AFTER THAWING
Bagels	2 months	1-2 weeks
Bread Dough, commercial	Use-by date	After baking, 4-7 days
Burritos, sandwiches	2 months	3-4 days
Egg substitutes	12 months	Date on Carton
Fish, breaded	3-6 months	Do not defrost. Cook frozen.
Fish, raw	6 months	1-2 days
Fruit such as berries, melons	4-6 months	4-5 days
Guacamole	3-4 months	3-4 days
Ice cream	2-4 months	
Juice concentrates	6-12 months	7-10 days
Lobster tails	3 months	2 days
Pancakes, Waffles	2 months	3-4 days
Sausages, uncooked	1-2 months	1-2 days
precooked	1-2 months	1 week
Sherbet, sorbet	2-4 months	
Shrimp, shellfish	12 months	1-2 days
Soy crumbles and hotdogs	9 months	3-4 days
Soy meat substitutes	12-18 months	3-4 days
Tempeh	12 months	1-2 weeks
Topping, whipped	6 months	2 weeks
TV Dinners, entrees, breakfast	3 months	Do not defrost. Cook frozen.
Vegetables	8 months	3-4 days

Deli foods – Shelf Life After Coded Date

DELI FOODS	REFRIGERATOR	FREEZER
Main dishes or meals, hot or refrigerated	3-4 days	2-3 months
Meats covered with gravy or broth	1-2 days	6 months
Commercial brand vacuum packed dinners with USDA seal	2 weeks	Does not freeze well
Chicken, rotisserie or fried	3-4 days	4 months
Luncheon meats, store-sliced	3-5 days	1-2 months
Paté	1-2 days	1-2 months
Cheese, store-sliced, hard cheese such as cheddar or swiss	3-4 weeks	6 months
Cheese, soft (such as brie, bel paese, goat cheese, fresh mozzarella)	1 week	6 months
Salads containing meat, fish, poultry or eggs	3-4 days	Don't freeze.
Salads, vegetable	3-5 days	Don't freeze.
Sidedishes such as cooked vegetables, rice or potatoes	3-4 days	1-2 months
Olives	2 weeks	Don't freeze.
Pudding	Package date; 2 days after opening	Don't freeze.
Fruit, cut	Package date; 4 days after opening	Don't freeze.
Cheesecake	1 week	2-3 months

Shelf-stable foods – Shelf Life After Coded Date

SHELF STABLE FOODS	UNOPENED IN PANTRY	REFRIGERATOR AFTER OPENING	IN PANTRY AFTER OPENING
Baby food, jars or cans, fruits & vegetables, meats & eggs	Use-by date	2-3 days	2 months
cereal, dry mixes		1 day	
Formula		1-2 days	
Bacon Bits, imitation	4 months	Refer to jar	4 months
Beans, Dried	12 months		12 months
Canned goods, low acid (such as meat, poultry, fish, gravy, stew, soups, beans, carrots, corn, pasta, peas, potatoes, spinach)	2-5 years	3-4 days	
Canned goods, high acid (such as juices, fruit, pickles, sauerkraut, tomato soup, and foods in vinegar-based sauce)	12-18 months	5-7 days	
Cereal, ready-to-eat	6-12 months		3 months
Cook before eating (oatmeal, etc.)	12 months		6-12 months
Coffee, whole beans, non-vacuum bag ground, in cans	1-3 weeks	(For all types; 3-4 months frozen; 2 weeks refrigerated)	1 week
Instant, jars and tins	2 years		1 week
	12 months		2-3 months
BAKING INGREDIENTS			
Baking powder	6 months		3 months
Baking soda	18 months		6 months
Biscuit or pancake mix	15 months		Pkg use-by date
Cake, Brownie, Bread Mixes	12-18 months		
Commeal, regular, degerminated stone ground or blue	6-12 months	12 months	
	1 month	2-3 months	
Cornstarch	18 months		18 months
Flour, white	6-12 months		6-8 months
Flour, whole wheat	1 month	6-8 months	
Frosting, canned	10 months	1 week	
Frosting mixes	12 months		3 months
Chocolate, unsweetened and semi-sweet, solid	18-24 months		1 year
Chocolate syrup	2 years	6 months	
Cocoa and Cocoa Mixes	Indefinitely		1 year
CONDIMENTS			
Barbecue sauce, bottled	12 months	4 months	1 month
Ketchup, Cocktail or Chili sauce	12 months	6 months	1 month
Chutney	12 months	1-2 months	
Horseradish, in jar	12 months	3-4 months	
Mayonnaise, commercial	2-3 months	2 months	1 month
Mustard	12 months	12 months	
Olives, black and green	12-18 months	2 weeks	
Pickles	12 months	1-2 weeks	
Salad Dressings, commercial, bottled	10-12 months	3 months	
Salsa, picante & taco	12 months	1 month	
COOKIES, packaged	2 months	8-12 months frozen	4 weeks
	8 months	Freeze or refrigerate 3-4 months	1 month

PANTRY STORAGE

Shelf-stable foods such as canned goods, cereal, baking mixes, pasta, dry beans, mustard, ketchup and peanut butter can be kept safely at room temperature.

To keep these foods at their best quality, store them in clean, dry, cool (below 85°F) cabinets away from the stove or the refrigerator's exhaust. Extremely hot (over 100°F) and freezing temperatures are harmful to canned goods.

In general, most canned foods have a long shelf life, and when properly stored, can be eaten for several years:

- **Low-acid canned goods** – two to five years (canned meat and poultry, stews, soups except tomato, pasta products, potatoes, corn, carrots, spinach, beans, beets, peas and pumpkin).

- **High-acid canned goods** – 12 to 18 months (tomato products, fruits, sauerkraut and foods in vinegar-based sauces or dressings).

Some canned hams are shelf-stable. Never store ham or any foods labeled "keep refrigerated" in the pantry. These foods must be stored in the refrigerator.

Many shelf-stable foods remain edible for several weeks, or even months, after opening, as the accompanying chart indicates. However, be sure to read package labels. Some items must be refrigerated after opening.

Do Not Consume Food from Cans or Jars if:

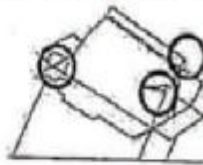
- Leaking or stained
- Swollen can
- Rusty
- Badly dented, crimped or pinched
- Container is cracked
- Foul odor
- Safety seals are broken or missing
- Lids are loose or missing
- Foods exhibit changed color or odor –
- **NEVER TASTE SUSPICIOUS FOODS!**



Do Not Consume Food from Boxes If:

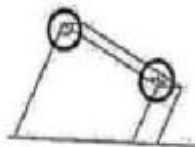
Inside bag:

- Is torn or leaking
- Seals are ripped
- Has moldy or foreign objects inside



Box without an inside bag:

- Is open or torn
- Is stained or wet
- Has live or dead insects, webs, or droppings



Tips on Storing Canned and Boxed Food:

- ✓ Store cans and boxes off the floor, either on a pallet or shelf and 18 inches away from the wall so air can circulate
- ✓ Store canned and boxed goods in a clean, dry, and cool area (below 85°F).
- ✓ Extremely hot (over 100°F) and cold (below 30°F) temperatures can damage canned goods and shorten shelf life.
- ✓ Always rotate your stock – First in-First out!

Shelf-stable foods – Shelf life after Coded Date

SHELF STABLE FOODS	UNOPENED IN PANTRY	REFRIGERATOR AFTER OPENING	IN PANTRY AFTER OPENING
Diet powder mixes	6 months		3 months
Extracts, vanilla	3 years		1 year
Fruits, dried	6 months	6 months	1 month
Garlic, chopped	18 months	Refrigerate; use by date on jar	
Commercial jars	3 years		
Gelatin, flavored	18 months		Use all or reseal for 3-4 months
Unflavored	3 years		
Gravy, jars and cans	2-5 years	1-2 days	Use entire can
Dry Gravy mixes	2 years	1-2 days	Mix entire packet
Herbs, dried	1-2 years		Cool, dark place 1
Honey	12 months		12 months
Jams, jellies, preserves	12 months	6 months	
Jerky, commercially dried	12 months	2-3 months	
Jerky, homemade		1-2 months	1-2 months
Juice, boxes	4-6 months	8-12 days	
Lentils, dried	12 months		12 months
Marshmallows, Marshmallow creme	2-4 months		1 month
Milk, canned evaporated	12 months	4-5 days	
Molasses	12 months		6 months
Mushrooms, dried	6 months		3 months
Oils, olive or vegetable	6 months	4 months	1-3 months
Nuts oils	6 months		
Vegetable oil sprays	2 years		1 year
Nuts, jars or cans	12 months	Refrigerate 4-6 months Freeze 9-12 months	1 month
Pasta, dry, without eggs	2 years		1 year
Dry egg noodles	2 years		1-2 months
Peanut butter	6-9 months		2-3 months
Peas, dried split	12 months		12 months
Pectin	Use by pkg. date		1 month
Popcorn, dry kernels in a jar	2 years		1 year
Commercially popped in bags	2-3 months		1-2 weeks
Microwave packets	12 months		1-2 days popped
Potato chips™	2 months		1-2 weeks
Potatoes, instant	6-12 months		6-12 months
Pudding mixes	12 months		3-4 months
Rice, white or wild	2 years	6 months	1 year
Brown Rice	1 year		1 year
Flavored or herb mixes	6 months		Use all
Sauce mixes, nondairy (spaghetti, taco, etc.)	2 years		Use entire amount
Cream sauces, milk solids	1 year		
Shortening, solid	8 months		3 months
Soda such as carbonated			
Cola drinks, mixers:	3 mos. after date	2-3 days	1 week
Diet sodas, bottles or cans			
Regular sodas, bottles			
Regular sodas, cans	9 mos. after date		2 weeks
Soup mixes, dry bouillon	12 months		12 months
SOY PRODUCTS			
Soy or rice beverage, Shelf stable	3 months or "use-by" date	7-10 days	
Soy beverage powders	6 months		3-4 months
Soy flour, de-fatted, low-fat	1 year		1 year
Soy flour, full-fat	2 months	6 months	
Textured soy protein (TSP)	2 years		3-4 months
Re-hydrated TSP	3-4 months	3-4 days	
Spaghetti Sauce in jars	18 months	4 days	

Shelf-stable foods/bakery items

SHELF STABLE FOODS	UNOPENED IN PANTRY	REFRIGERATOR AFTER OPENING	IN PANTRY AFTER OPENING
Spices, whole ground paprika, red pepper, & chili powder	2-4 years total		Included in total
	2-3 years total		Included in total
Sugar, brown granulated confectioners sugar substitutes	2 years total	Store in refrigerator	Included in total
	4 months		
	2 years		
	18 months		
Syrup, pancake	2 years		Sugar never spoils
Genuine or real maple	12 months	12 months	
Tapioca	12 months		12 months
Tea, bags loose instant	18 months		12 months
	2 years		6-12 months
	3 years		6-12 months
Toaster pastries, fruit filled non-fruit fillings	6 months		Keep foil packets sealed
	9 months		
Tomatoes, sun dried, packed in oil packed in cellophane	12 months	6-12 months	3-6 months
	9 months	6-12 months	3-6 months
Vinegar	2 years		12 months
Yeast, dry, packets and jars	Use by date	Refrigerate open jars	
Water, bottled	1-2 years		3 months
Worcestershire Sauce	1 year		1 year
BAKERY ITEMS	SHELF	REFRIGERATOR	FREEZER
Bread, commercial*	2-4 days	7-14 days	3 months
Bread, flat (tortillas, pita)	2-4 days	4-7 days	4 months
Cakes, angel food chiffon, sponge chocolate fruit cake made from mix pound cake	1-2 days	1 week	2 months
	1-2 day	1 week	2 months
	1-2 days	1 week	4 months
	1 month	6 months	12 months
	3-4 days	1 week	4 months
	3-4 days	1 week	6 months
(Refrigerate any cake with frosting made of dairy products or eggs)	*Any breads containing meat, hard cooked eggs, custard filling or other perishable ingredients must be refrigerated within two hours.		
Cheesecake		1 week	2-3 months
Cookies, bakery or homemade	2-3 weeks	2 months	8-12 months
Croissants, butter	1 day	1 week	2 months
Doughnuts, glazed or cake dairy cream filled	1-2 days	1 week	1 month
		3-4 days	
Eclairs, dairy cream filled		3-4 days	
Muffins	1-2 days	1 week	2 months
Pastries, danish	1-2 days	1 week	2 months
Pies, cream chiffon fruit mincemeat pecan pumpkin		3-4 days	
		1-2 days	
	1-2 days	1 week	8 months
	2 hours	1 week	8 months
	2 hours	3-4 days	1-2 months
Quiche	2 hours	3-4 days	2 months
Rolls, yeast, baked yeast, partially baked filled, meat or vegetables	3-4 days	1 week	2 months
	Package date	1 week	2 months
	2 hours	3-4 days	2 months



KEEPING FOOD SAFE DURING A POWER OUTAGE

Sooner or later, the electricity may fail due to a power outage, and a refrigerator without electricity cannot keep food safe very long. To be prepared, keep an appliance thermometer in both the refrigerator and freezer to monitor the temperature.

In the Freezer

- Even when the power is off, a full freezer will stay frozen for about two days; a half-full freezer about one day. So keep the freezer door closed.
- If you think power will be out for several days, locate some block ice, bags of ice or dry ice to put in the freezer along with your refrigerated perishable food, or keep the food continually iced in an insulated cooler.
- You can also pack foods tightly together to insulate one another.
- All thawed raw or cooked foods can be refrozen if they still contain ice crystals or are 40°F or below, but there may be some quality loss.
- Foods thawed and held above 40°F for more than two hours should be discarded.

Foods in the Refrigerator

- Refrigerated foods should be edible as long as power is out no more than four hours.
- Discard any perishable foods that have been above 40°F for two hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture, or feels warm to the touch.
- If you have any doubts about the safety of any item in your refrigerator after power is restored, it's best to err on the side of caution and discard it.

For additional information about food safety during power outages, call the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555.

Information for these guidelines were developed by: Food Marketing Institute, Washington, DC 20005 with the cooperation of Cornell University, Institute of Food Science, Cornell Cooperative Extension

IS MY FOOD SAFE?

"Best Before" Date

A "Best Before" date is **only** required for foods with a shelf life of less than 90 days, although they may appear on other products. Health Canada says **you can buy and eat foods that are past the "Best Before" date**. The food's flavour, appearance, or texture may change over time.



Best before dates apply to unopened products only. Once opened, the shelf life of a food may change.

Food past the "Best Before" date is safe to eat unless...

- Packaging is damaged
- Food smells bad or odd
- Food looks bad or odd
- Can is oddly shaped, dented, or rusty
- Seal is broken and the product is leaking

Canned items are among the safest foods around and may be safe after five years or more if stored in a cool pantry.



"Expiry" Date

"Expiry" dates appear on medications, meal replacements (Boost) and liquid supplements (infant formula). Health Canada recommends throwing out an item if it is past its "Expiry" date. "Expiry" dates always have "EXP" before the date.

If "EXP" isn't there, then it is a "Best Before" date.

In Canada, the year is always first in "Best Before" and "Expiry" dates

Manufacturing codes are printed on most foods by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency and manufacturers to track product.

Manufacturing codes are not "Best Before" or "Expiry" dates

Manufacturing/Bar Code



If in doubt, throw it out!

References:

Health Canada website: www.healthycanadians.gc.ca

Canadian Food Inspection Agency website: www.inspection.gc.ca

Serious Can Defects



**Dented at junction
of side and end**



**Sharp dent or dent
on seam**



Swollen or bulging



Pitted rust or leaking

**Cans with any of these defects may be unsafe.
Discard them!**