



# Product Date Guidelines

## What is the Use By Date (UBD)?

You should not distribute or consume foods after their Use By Date, and it is illegal to sell a product after its Use By Date. **If a product has passed its Use By Date – please discard.**

## Best Before Date (BBD)

The BBD is an indicator of a product's quality up to a certain date. These products can be legally sold and safely consumed for some time after the Best Before Date, although the quality may begin to decline. **You may safely eat foods for some time after the Best Before date while using discretion.**

## Product Date Suggestions

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Products with UBD Date</b></li> <li>• <b>Prepacked fruit &amp; vegetables</b></li> <li>• <b>Baby food</b></li> </ul>	<b>Up to UBD/BBD</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fresh bread</li> </ul>	<b>BBD + up to 3 days</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thickened cream</li> <li>• Yoghurts, dips</li> <li>• Dairy desserts</li> <li>• Eggs</li> </ul>	<b>BBD + 2 weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sour cream, soft cream (incl cottage cheese)</li> <li>• Shredded cheese</li> <li>• Soft cheese e.g. brie, camembert, blue</li> <li>• High water content cheese e.g. feta, ricotta</li> </ul>	<b>BBD + 4 weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Non-dairy UHT milk e.g. soy, almond</li> </ul>	<b>BBD + 6 weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UHT Milk</li> </ul>	<b>BBD + 8 weeks</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frozen protein – uncooked</li> </ul>	<b>BBD + 3 months</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hard cheese e.g. cheddar, edam</li> <li>• Margarine</li> <li>• Butter and butter blends</li> </ul>	<b>BBD + 4 months</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frozen protein – cooked</li> <li>• All other frozen products</li> <li>• <b>All other grocery / shelf stable</b></li> </ul>	<b>BBD + 6 months</b>
Prepacked fresh meat Up to UBD, or may be hard frozen prior to UBD and re-labelled accordingly.	

# FOOD SAFETY



Food can be legally sold or given away after its Best Before date, which is why we play such a pivotal role in rescuing and redirecting quality food. Suppliers also have the ability to issue a Best Before 'code extension notice' where food is still safe to consume.

**For more information visit [foodstandards.gov.au](http://foodstandards.gov.au)**

Most foods have a "Best Before" date for quality and a "Use By" or "Expiry" date for safety.

We have strict controls around food safety. We only accept donations before the use by/expiry dates and distribute them immediately.

## Use By and Expiry date

- » Critical date marker showing when a food must be consumed by
- » Applied to highly-perishable items like meals, meat, dairy, cooked food
- » Food beyond its 'Use By' date might contain harmful bacteria and unsafe to eat
- » It's unsafe to keep or eat food that has passed its 'Use By' date, even if it seems ok

## Best Before date

'Best Before' dates are about food quality, not safety. If food has passed its 'best before' date, it does not mean it is unsafe, but it might lose its colour, flavour or texture.

- » It is not dangerous to eat food passed its 'best before' date
- » Often found on canned foods, packaged products, long-life items, produce and pasta
- » Food will typically be ok to eat for 6 to 12 months after the 'best before' date

**As a guide we recommend you consume items within these periods of the Best Before dates. We are able to distribute items within these periods.**

- » **1 week:** fresh juice
- » **2 weeks:** thickened cream, yoghurt, dips, dairy desserts, eggs
- » **4 weeks:** sour cream, soft cream, soft cheese
- » **3 months:** frozen raw mince, frozen seafood, UHT and plant based milks
- » **4 months:** butter, margarine, hard cheese
- » **6 months:** ready made meals, cooked protein, all other frozen products, soft drinks, canned meals, salad dressing, spreads, pet care (dry)
- » **12 months:** all other raw frozen meat (excluding mince), frozen vegetables, chips, cereals, museli bars, dry cookies, water, coffee, tea, milo, flour, sugar, salt, herbs, powdered soups/meal bases, oils, pasta, rice, pet care (wet), personal care, household care products

## Defrosting frozen items

Frozen items should be defrosted in your fridge or microwave and cooked on the same day it is defrosted.



# FOOD SAFETY TIPS



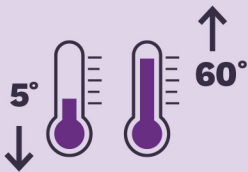
## Tip 1

Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap before cooking and after you touch your hair, nose, eyes, raw food, smoking, or after using the toilet.



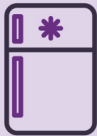
## Tip 2

Wash fresh fruit, vegetables and herbs before eating. Don't wash meat, fish, chicken or eggs. Use separate chopping boards for raw meat, seafood and vegetables. Do not use any food if it has passed the 'Use By' date.



## Tip 3

Keep food out of the 'temperature danger zone'. Keep frozen food in a freezer below -18C, cold food in a fridge below 5C. Keep hot food above 60C. Defrost food in the fridge or microwave, not on the counter or in water.



## Tip 4

When storing hot leftovers, refrigerate them after they have stopped steaming. Only keep it for 2-3 days before freezing or disposing.



## Tip 5

Take special care with your high-risk foods. These foods should be stored safely and not eaten after they pass their 'Use By' date.

High risk foods include:

- » Dairy products like milk
- » Raw and cooked meats and seafood
- » Premixed salads
- » Cooked rice and pasta
- » Food containing eggs
- » Ready-to-eat meals like sandwiches, rolls and pizzas





## Expiry and Distribution – A Quick Explainer

Foodbank Victoria receives a wide variety of food and grocery products from our donors. Many of our products come to us because they are close to the end of their shelf life, and we work hard to ensure that those products are supplied to our agency partners as quickly as possible.

Under Australian (and NZ) Food Safety Standards, there are two main types of expiry dates – ‘Best Before’ and ‘Use By’. Most food products you will see at Foodbank Victoria and on your supermarket shelves use one of these formats.

### Use By Date (UBD)

This is a mark of product safety. You should not supply or consume foods after their Use By Date, and it is illegal to sell a product after its Use By has passed without an official shelf life extension from the product manufacturer. In some cases, shelf life can be extended by freezing a product before its Use By Date. Once thawed, it should be used immediately.

### Best Before Date (BBD)

This is the most common format. Most packaged foods have a Best Before Date, which indicates the product’s quality up to that date. These products can be legally sold and safely consumed after their Best Before Date, although the quality will often begin to decline.

We have worked with over 2,000 food donors to develop the guidelines below. These are suggestions and not legal advice, but it is very similar to Foodbank Victoria’s own distribution guide.

### Products with a Use By Date

Product Type	Suggestion for Charity Partner Issue Guide
Prepacked fresh meat, fish, and ready to eat meals	Up to UBD, or in some cases may be hard frozen prior to UBD, and re-labelled accordingly
Other products with Use By expiry format	Up to UBD





## Products with a Best Before Date

Product Type	Suggestion for Charity Partner Issue Guide
<b>Fresh / Chilled Products</b>	
Fresh bread	BBD + up to 3 days
Eggs	BBD + 2 weeks
Butter and butter blends	BBD + 4 months
Margarine	BBD + 4 months
Thickened cream	BBD + 2 weeks
Sour cream, crème fraiche etc	BBD + 4 weeks
Yoghurts and dips	BBD + 2 weeks
Dairy desserts	BBD + 2 weeks
Shredded cheese	BBD + 4 weeks
Soft cheese (e.g. brie, camembert, blue)	BBD + 4 weeks
Fresh cheese (e.g. feta, ricotta, cottage cheese)	BBD + 4 weeks
Hard cheese (e.g. cheddar, edam)	BBD + 2 months
<b>Frozen Products</b>	
Frozen protein – uncooked	BBD + 3 months
Frozen protein – cooked	BBD + 6 months
All other frozen products	BBD + 6 months



<b>Shelf Stable / Ambient Products</b>	
Baby food	Up to BBD
Dairy UHT Milk	BBD + 8 weeks
Non-dairy UHT milk (e.g. soy, almond)	BBD + 6 weeks
Pasta and rice	BBD + 1 year
Dry cooking/baking ingredients (flour, sugar, salt, herbs, powdered soup/meal base etc)	BBD + 1 year
Cooking oils and preserved foods	BBD + 1 year
Coffee and tea	BBD + 1 year
Water (non-carbonated)	BBD + 1 year
All other shelf stable products	BBD + 6 months
<b>Non-food Products</b>	
Personal and household cleaning products	Expiry + 1 year
Pet care products (tinned /wet)	BBD + 1 year
Pet care products (dry)	BBD + 6 months
Pet care products (chilled)	Up to expiry

For further information, please visit the Food Standards Australia & NZ website ([www.foodstandards.gov.au](http://www.foodstandards.gov.au)) or get in touch with us directly.