



Best Before Date (BBD) vs. Expiry Dates

You can often identify whether a food item is safe to eat by using your senses to examine the appearance, smell, and feel. However, if you are ever unsure it is best to follow the rule: when in doubt, throw it out.

The GVFB follows Food Bank Canada's guidelines for Best Before Dates and food distribution. Expired food is never distributed.

What is the difference between Best Before Dates and Expiry Dates?

Best Before Dates - *will look like BB/MA*

Foods that have pasted their BBD are still safe to eat. The BBD is the date in which the food products will have the best quality, taste, and nutritional value. The GVFB will distribute goods up until 18 months after the best before date, depending on the food. Please see our [Food Distribution Guidelines](#) for full details.

It is important to note that a best before date only depicts the shelf life for unopened products. Therefore, foods with a BBD are safe to consume after that date if the package has remained unopened. Following the guidelines of food can help determine whether the food is still good to eat. Please see our Food Distribution Guidelines on our website for full details.

Expiry Dates - *will look like EXP*

In Canada only a small amount of food products has an official expiration date. Food past their expiry date is **unsafe to eat**. An expiry date is required on certain foods including formulated liquid diets, meal replacements, nutritional supplements, and infant formula. Expiry dates ensure both the potency and safety of the product. The GVFB will not distribute any items after their expiry date.

Food Safety Guidelines

Do not eat the following items if they show one or more of the listed symptoms



DRY GOODS

- Appearance is soft or moldy.
- Badly bruised or colouring is off.
- Rancid or pungent odor.



CANNED GOODS

- Can bulging, rusted, or corroded.
- Signs of leaking or broken seal.
- Contents cloudy, mushy, or bubbling.



FRESH PRODUCE

- Signs of a rip or tear in inner packaging.
- Visible water or moisture damage.
- Display of chewing or pest infestation.



DAIRY PRODUCTS

- Swollen or damaged packaging.
- Bad odor or strange consistency.
- Visible signs of mold.



GRAINS & OATS

- Unusual smell and colour.
- Hardens or has an odd texture.
- White or cloudy spots.