



# Shepparton Foodshare Best Before and Expiry Guide

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Australian (and NZ) Food Safety Standards have two main types of **EXPIRY** indicators:

- Use By (UBD).
- Best Before (BBD).

Most food products you will see at Shepparton Foodshare will feature one of these formats.

## Use by date (UBD)

A mark of product safety. You should **not distribute foods after their Use by Date**.

In some cases, shelf life can be extended by freezing a product before its UBD. A use by date signifies when a food must be consumed by for health and safety reasons. It is marked on highly perishable foods, such as ready-made meals, and items that are classified as high risk upon expiration

Things to remember about use-by dates:

- Check high-risk foods daily for signs of expiration.
- Food may smell and look fine despite its use-by date, however food-poisoning bacteria can still be present. Keep to a 'better safe than sorry' philosophy.
- Always follow storage instructions to ensure a food reaches its use-by date. Incorrect storage may mean an item expires before even reaching its date.
- Always stick to any use-by date, as expired foods may cause harm or illness, including food poisoning, if eaten. Foods beyond their use-by dates should not be cooked, frozen or consumed and should be thrown away.

## Best before date (BBD)

The most common format. Most packaged foods feature a BBD, which is an indicator of a product's quality up to a certain date.

A best-before date is used to indicate quality rather than safety. It calls out the period up until a food is at the end of its peak quality

Best-before dates are found on food items such as fruits and vegetables, dried pasta, rice, tinned and canned foods. It may not be unsafe to eat a food past its best-before date; you may simply notice that some of its quality, flavour or texture has been



Things to remember about best-before dates:

It appears on foods with a generally longer shelf life and on a range of items, including frozen, fresh, tinned, canned and dried products.

- As with use-by dates, following a food’s storage instructions makes sure an item retains its quality for as long as possible.
- Some foods, such as eggs or baked goods, are ideally eaten as close to the best-before date as possible. **You may only get one or two days past the date.**
- You can still eat foods for a while after the best-before date as they should be safe but they may have lost some quality. Foods that have a best-before date can legally be sold after that date provided the food is fit for human consumption.

### Additional notes

- Foods with a shelf life of more than two years may not be marked with a best-before date.
- The only food that can have a different date mark on it is bread, which can be labelled with a baked-on or baked-for date if its shelf life is less than seven days.
- If specific storage conditions are required for a product to keep until its best-before or use-by date, suppliers must include this information on the label, e.g. ‘This yoghurt should be kept refrigerated’.
- Foods that have a shelf life of two years or longer, e.g., some canned foods, do not need to be labelled with a best-before date. It is difficult to give the consumer an accurate guide as to how long these foods will keep, as they may retain their quality for many years and are likely to be consumed well before they spoil.

**This Chart is a suggestion and is not legal advice, but it is very similar to Foodbank Victoria’s own distribution guide.**

Product Group	Suggestion for Agency Issue Guide
Prepacked fresh meat	Up to UBD, or may be hard frozen prior to UBD and re-labelled accordingly
Prepacked fruit & vegetables	Up to UBD
Products with UBD Date	Up to UBD
Fresh bread	BBD + up to 3 days
Thickened cream	BBD + 2 weeks
Yoghurts, dips	BBD + 2 weeks

Dairy desserts	BBD + 2 weeks
Eggs	BBD + 2 weeks
Sour cream, soft cream (incl cottage cheese)	BBD + 4 weeks
Shredded cheese	BBD + 4 weeks
Soft cheese e.g. brie, camembert, blue	BBD + 4 weeks
High water content cheese e.g. feta, ricotta	BBD + 4 weeks
UHT Milk	BBD + 8 weeks
Non-dairy UHT milk e.g. soy, almond	BBD + 6 weeks
Hard cheese e.g. cheddar, edam	BBD + 4 months
Butter and butter blends	BBD + 4 months
Margarine	BBD + 4 months
Frozen protein – uncooked	BBD + 3 months
Frozen protein – cooked	BBD + 6 months
All other frozen products	BBD + 6 months
Baby food	Up to BBD
All other grocery / shelf stable	BBD + 6 months

*The data used in this guideline has been sourced from Food standard's Australia, Woolworths Guidelines and Food Bank Victoria Guidelines. The Australian Standards were updated April 2022*