

*From the desk of Lori Harvey RDN, LD*

## A Quick Guide to Package Dates: What Do They Mean?

Do you know the difference between Expiration, Sell-By, Use-Before, and Use-By dates? Chances are you are throwing away perfectly good food.

The following guidelines and information should help to take the guesswork out of determining whether your food is good to eat.

**Expiration date:** this is the last day the food is safe to eat. If you have not consumed it by this date, throw it away. The only two foods are required to include dating requirements are infant formula and baby foods.

**Sell-By date:** Date printed for the grocery store. If the item is not sold by this date, the store must remove it from the shelf. It is will safe to consume if eaten past the marked date. Depending on the food, you can store these items for days to weeks after the sell-by date.

**Use-By or Use-Before:** Means the food has a guarantee of peak freshness by this date, if it is stored properly. After this date, the food will remain safe to consume for a while, although it may have a lesser quality of taste, flavor, or nutrition.

### Canned Foods:

- Many times the expiration date has more to do with the can itself, and not the actual food; many foods will outlast the can
- If the can is dented at a double seam on the top or bottom, throw it away immediately
- If the can is rusted, throw it away
- If the can had a severe dent that pulls the top or bottom, throw it out
- If the can is swollen, do not consume its contents

Questioning whether the food is okay to eat? Always Remember: "When in doubt, throw it out"

### **DELIVERY DAY – AN IMPORTANT DATE**

The focus of this month's newsletter is package dates and what they mean. Delivery dates for our many clients are very important in their lives. The hot meal delivered each day by a driver who truly cares is important for the health of our clients. In addition, the daily safety check and friendly greeting to make sure everything is well are greatly appreciated by our clients and their families

A gift from your heart will help ease the financial burdens of some of the most fragile and vulnerable people in our communities and send the comforting message that people truly care. Your gift of \$30.00 pays for ten meals for someone who cannot pay. Whatever you can give will help. It's simple. Just place your gift in the envelope you received.

Thank you!

*Phil Marcin*

Vice President of Development

**Questions?** If you have any questions on this or any nutrition-related topic, or have an idea for a future *Healthy Bite* topic, please call our registered dietitian, Lori Harvey. You can reach her by telephone at 330-376-7717 extension 140 or by email [lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org](mailto:lharvey@mobilemealsinc.org).

### **GRIEVANCE POLICY**

**In order to provide clients with the best services possible, we ask you to contact Elaine Seyerle at Mobile Meals with complaints, suggestions, or if you are not satisfied with your services. If, after your contact, you are still not satisfied with the response or have further questions, you may forward your concerns to the appropriate monitoring agency. The contact number for the Home Care Ombudsman is 1-800-421-7277.**