

Date Marking

Date marking minimizes bacteria growth

*Date marking can limit the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*, a bacteria that grows even at refrigerated temperatures. Date marking ensures food is sold, served or discarded before these bacteria can cause people to get sick.*

Any foods that meet all of the following criteria must be date marked:

It is a "Time/Temperature Control for Safety Food" or TCS food, which means a food requires time/temperature to control the growth of pathogenic microorganisms or toxin formation.

It is a ready-to-eat food that may be eaten without any additional preparation, and

It is kept for more than 24 hours.



Helpful Tips:

- Food must be sold, served or discarded within 7 days of the food being prepared or opened.
- (Example: Food prepared or opened on April 1 must be sold, served, or discarded on April 7).
- The count begins on the day that the food was prepared or a commercial container was opened.

REQUIRES DATE MARKING

- Deli salads prepared in a food establishment
- Hot or cold smoked fish products and ceviche (fish products that are dried, marinated, or preserved on-site)
- Milk (animal milks, nut milks, and soy milk)
- Deli meats including hot dogs
- Soft Cheeses (feta, brie, and mozzarella)
- Cottage cheese
- Cream cheese
- Ricotta cheese
- Cut melons (watermelon, cantaloupe, and honey dew)
- Cut leafy greens (lettuce, spinach, and cabbage)
- Cut tomatoes
- Refrigerated foods kept longer than 24 hours after opening or preparing



DOES NOT REQUIRE DATE MARKING

- Deli salads prepared or packaged in a food processing plant
- Hard cheese: cheddar, gruyere, parmesan, Reggiano, and Romano
- Semi-soft cheeses: blue cheese, gorgonzola, gouda, and Monterey jack, Swiss, provolone, processed pasteurized cheese
- Cultured dairy products: yogurt, sour cream, and buttermilk
- Preserved fish products: pickled herring, dried or salted cod
- Shelf stable, dry fermented sausages: pepperoni and salami not labeled as “keep refrigerated”
- Food items that do not need to be refrigerated
- Foods that will be cooked before eating (eggs and raw meat)
- Foods that will be consumed within 24 hours of preparation or opening
- Condiments (mustard and ketchup)