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| **What’s in a Label?**  Confusion over date labeling leads to billions of pounds of food waste every year. Part of  reducing waste is understanding the difference between:   * **Sell-By**: This label is for retailers to inform them of the date by which the product   should be sold or removed from the shelf life. This does not mean that the product is  unsafe to consume after the date. Typically, one-third of a product’s shelf-life remains  after the sell-by date for the consumer to use at home.   * **Use-By**: For consumers, this label indicates the date by which the product should be   eaten; mostly because of the quality, not because the item will necessarily make you sick  if eaten after the use-by date. However, after the use-by date, product quality is likely to go down much faster and safety could be lessened.   * **Best-By**: this is a suggestion to the consumer on which date the product should be consumed to   assure for ideal quality.   * **Closed or coded dates**: Packing numbers for use by the manufacturer.   Source: Bob Brackett, PhD, CFS, Director of the Institute for Food Safety and Health at the Illinois Institute of Technology. |
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