

Does a 'best-by' date mean a 'goodbye' deadline for food?



“With grocery prices going up, it’s more important now than ever to make the most of what you have in your pantry,” said Barbara Brown, Oklahoma State University Extension food specialist. “Don’t be fooled by use-by and best-by dates. These foods can still be perfectly safe to consume.”

Brown said the easiest way to avoid the question is to proactively rotate items in the refrigerator and on kitchen shelves. This helps ensure food is at its freshest and consumers won’t waste money by throwing out food unnecessarily. However, if that’s not possible, it helps to understand what those industry terms represent.

“Almost every food item you buy today has some sort of date on it. Food companies have done research and know how long a food will keep while still supplying the freshest taste and maintaining good nutrition,” Brown said. “After that date, taste and nutritional elements do begin to deteriorate, so it’s better to use these foods before the use-by or best-by dates.”

Keep in mind, however, that doesn’t have anything to do with the safety of the food. Those food items still are perfectly safe to eat after those dates have passed as long as there are no signs of spoilage such as leaks, bulges, mold or odd odors. Baby formula presents a special consideration: Formula that is out of date will be lower in nutrition, which isn’t good for infants whose only source of food may be that formula.

Some food items don’t have an actual date printed on them; instead, they may have a manufacturer’s code. In that case, take a permanent marker and write the date of purchase on the label when it’s added to the pantry.

Brown suggested checking older cans to make sure they don’t have leaky seams or dents. As a matter of basic kitchen hygiene, be sure to wipe off lids before opening, regardless of whether the item was purchased today or a year ago. Also, once the can is open, look over the food. If it has an off odor or color, throw it out.

“As long as the product hasn’t been opened, the boxed, jarred and canned food items are good for several months or even a year after the best-by date. A product such as peanut butter, which is opened multiple times, can become rancid due to the fat content,” she said. “A simple sniff test will let you know if the product still tastes good.”

Dried foods such as rice or beans have longer shelf lives, but if the package is torn, moisture can get in and reduce the taste and nutrition of the product. Beans or rice that have been in the pantry for two or three years may require an extended cooking time in order to properly rehydrate.

Brown said this is not a safety issue, but a taste issue. The shelf life can be extended to some extent by storing bags of beans or rice in zipped freezer bags or hard containers.

Although eggs aren’t stored in the pantry, Brown said this is another food item that is good beyond the date printed on the carton. Assuming eggs have been handled and stored properly, they typically are good four to five weeks beyond their use-by date.

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If you receive the monthly newsletter by mail and would like to receive it by email, please call Roxanne at 918-746-3706. Receiving it by email would greatly reduce our printing and postage expenses.

Thank you!

The Plant Prescription for A Better Mood

By Dr. Taylor Wallace



Food and mood. We intuitively know they're connected. That's why we reach for something sweet when we've had a bad morning or order coffee for the will power to finish a long workday.

We're a little duped by our instincts, though. The most important dietary drivers of our mood and cognitive abilities aren't these little pick-me-ups (tasty as they are). They're the choices we make, day in and day out, about how we fill our shopping carts, cupboards and plates.

It turns out that your love of roasted asparagus, your weekly veggie chili night, or your habit of eating sliced mango for breakfast is doing more than filling your belly, or even warding off cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Those fruits and vegetables may also be keeping you happy, chill, and able to think and remember clearly.

For example, research into the role of our dietary habits in the development of depression has taken off in recent years. Large studies that observe people and their diets show that a higher consumption of fruits and vegetables is associated with a reduced risk of depression. Another research group found that low fruit and vegetable intake was linked with poor mental health status and having been diagnosed with a mood or anxiety disorder. A cross-sectional European study found that the participants who reported eating more fruits and vegetables also were more likely to exhibit better mental health.

The takeaway here? Depression and anxiety are serious disorders that can require help from doctors and therapists. But whether you have a diagnosed mood disorder or just a case of the blah's, consistently meeting your five servings of fruits and vegetables a day may help. Aim to fill one-half of your plate — or more! When you're planning your meals, consider eating some of your fruits and veggies uncooked: one recent study found higher mental health outcomes for those eating more raw fruits and vegetables.

Of course, the brain thinks as much as it feels, therefore, fruits and vegetables can play a role. Ongoing research in this area is increasingly valuable; cognitive impairment tends to affect the elderly and, by 2030, one in five Americans will be over the age of 65. Although findings on diet and cognition have been mixed, there is evidence that high vs. low intake of fruits and vegetables is associated with a reduced risk of cognitive impairment. In this case, more may be better, so bring on the berries! One meta-analysis of multiple studies found a dose-dependent response, finding that every 100g per day increase in fruits and vegetables was related to a 13% decrease in cognitive impairment and dementia risk. 100g is just two medium carrots, ½ an apple or 6 tangerine wedges, so why not aim for more?

Does it surprise you that you may be able to prevent depression and anxiety, improve your cognitive abilities, and perhaps lower your risk of dementia by eating a high-quality diet full of fruits and vegetables?

I see that often. In our culture, we are sometimes taught to think of our minds as separate from our bodies, like we're carting our brains around in rolling suitcases. But nutrition isn't just from the neck down. Every plump berry, tender broccoli spear or juicy peach that helps your heart or reduces your diabetes risk is also a bite that feeds your brain — a delicious dietary difference you can feel in your mood and thinking, too. So, if you're reading this in line at the coffee bar, grab an apple or veggie pack to go with that drip. Your brain will thank you.

Source: <https://fruitsandveggies.org/stories/the-plant-prescription-for-a-better-mood/> Dr. Taylor Wallace, PhD, CFS, FACN – PBH Chief Food and Nutrition Scientist

Say YES! to your kids—within limits

Feel like all you say to your kids is “No”? If Netflix’s new movie [“Yes Day”](#) is any indication of the state of parenting in the U.S., you are not alone. This family-friendly film provides inspiration for ways parents can say “YES!” to your kids—within limits.

In the movie, Allison and Carlos (played by Jennifer Garner and Edgar Ramirez) were an adventurous couple who said “yes” to everything... until they had children and adopted a new outlook on life: “Saying ‘NO’ 50 times an hour—it’s called PARENTING!” Allison finds creative ways to say no like “Nope on a rope”. And backs it up with the old standbys “because I said so” and “I’m a your MOTHER. I don’t need to have a reason!”

Say “Yes!”—within limits

Garner’s character does have a point; saying “no” is a big part of parenting because we must set limits to keep our children safe and help them make good choices. But I think this movie aims to inspire us to find ways to say “Yes!” to our kids more often by setting ground rules using freedom within limits. I know it’s easier to say NO and stay focused on your to-do list, but take a breath and get creative. With some patience, you may be able to find a way to achieve your kids’ goals without causing any damage. When you take the time to consider your child’s ideas, you show that you hear them, you are listening. It’s important for everyone to feel heard. Who knows—it could bring your family closer. And will be more cherished than any item you might buy them.

In the film, a school counselor explains how it works: “For 24 hours, you say YES TO EVERYTHING that your kids want”. After the laughter and dubious remarks subside, he continues, “Well you set some ground rules.”



The Ground Rules: Freedom within Limits

Ground rules are an essential foundation for “Yes Day”. They work like [Freedom Within Limits](#), which we talk about a lot in [Active Parenting programs](#): The limits change as your child gets older and shows the ability to handle more freedom and responsibility.

- “YES DAY” has to be earned.
For example, kids must do their chores and finish their homework every day for the three weeks before Yes Day.
- You CANNOT ask to do anything dangerous or illegal.
I recommend a conversation about what “dangerous” means. In the movie, the family eats about 20 pounds of ice cream, which I would argue can be very dangerous to your digestive system!
- You cannot damage property.
This was not in the movie, but I recommend adding this rule. There is cringe-worthy damage to the car and home that makes for a fun movie plot but is **not** fun in real life.
- Each kid has a budget.
- Cannot be more than 20 miles (or whatever you think is reasonable) from home.
- Have fun!

Parents Unite!

Another important takeaway from the movie is that parents should be in agreement. Dad says to Mom: “You don’t need help from a “Yes Day”. What you need is a partner”. It was only a small moment in the movie, but it is a very important concept in parenting. When parents support each other, you’re not only modeling good behavior for your children but also helping them feel secure. They see that there is consistency with the rules of their family. If parents are not on the same page, children learn that they can get what they want by going around one parent to the other; which leads to division in the family.

Family Meetings

Find ways to say YES! to your kids—within limits and setting ground rules—and turn that “no” into a “YES!”. The movie is fun yet thought provoking. Even if a “Yes Day” is not right for your family it might inspire ideas that will bring your family closer. Maybe have a “Family Wish Jar” where every member of the family can put their wishes. A Family Meeting is a great place to discuss those wishes and explore whether they are feasible, safe, and cause no property damage. The ideas that meet those criteria stay in the “Family Wish Jar” and can be used occasionally as a special treat, for example when everyone has completed their chores and homework.

“Yes Day” (on Netflix) is based on the best-selling children’s book of the same name by Amy Krouse Rosenthal. For more on Family Meetings, check out [Doc Pop’s 52 Weeks of Active Parenting](#) and most of the [Active Parenting programs](#). Contributing author: Gabrielle Tingley Source: <https://activeparenting.com/say-yes-to-your-kids-within-limits>

Get Moving This Month with the Daily Steps Challenge

Getting and staying active doesn't have to involve gym memberships, fancy equipment or [complicated exercises](#). It can be as simple as walking. Moving around is vital to your physical and mental health — especially if you find yourself [sitting a lot during the day](#). What you do for the majority of your day is just as important — if not more so — than what you do in your workouts.

Your Goals: 1.) Walk at least 7,500 to 10,000 steps per day. 2.) Take a 30-minute walk at least 5 times a week.

Why 7,500 to 10,000 Daily Steps?

The idea that you should take 10,000 steps a day is nearly as universal as the idea that you should drink 8 glasses of water daily. But there's actually nothing inherently special about that number. It's more what it represents — namely, getting out of your seat and moving. The [health benefits of walking](#) — including improved mood, better heart health and stronger knees — level off at about 7,500 steps a day, according to a May 2019 [JAMA Internal Medicine](#) study. Remember that the intensity of your walks matter, too. The [Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans](#) recommend at least 150 to 300 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic activity like brisk walking each week.

Step 1: Find a Way to Measure Your Daily Steps

You can wear a fitness tracker on your wrist, clip a pedometer to your clothes or carry your phone with you to count your steps. If your smartphone doesn't come with a built-in health app to monitor your movement, try downloading a [walking app](#) for free.



Step 2: Join the LIVESTRONG.com Challenge Facebook Group

Our community of more than 48,000 members is here to support and motivate you through this challenge. Share your progress by posting screenshots of your step-counting app, photos of your fitness tracker or views from your daily walk — or simply tell the group how the day went.

Step 3: Start Wherever You Are

If you already use a pedometer or other step tracker, check how many steps you're currently taking on an average day. If you're not tracking steps, use the first day of the challenge to get an idea of how much you're walking without really pushing yourself. For most Americans, that number is between 3,000 and 4,000 steps, according to the [Mayo Clinic](#).

Step 4: Find Creative Ways to Log More Steps

No matter your baseline number, focus on walking a little more each day. Swap your water bottle for a small glass so you have to get up more often to refill it, or park farther away when you're running errands. These and other [creative ways to take more steps](#) can help you reach your daily goals. **Tip:** Program your wearable to remind you to get up and move when you've been sitting still for 20, 30 or 60 minutes. Or set an alarm on your phone for every hour and take a quick walk around the block, the floor or the room.

Step 5: Grab a Friend

Stay accountable by teaming up with a walking buddy. An April 2017 study in [Nature Communications](#) found that exercising was, essentially, contagious: People with fit and active friends were more likely to be fit and active themselves. Consider recruiting at least one person to join you for this challenge — either physically or virtually.

Step 6: Celebrate Your Success

As the month goes on, look back at your baseline and congratulate yourself for the progress you've made!

Source: <https://www.livestrong.com>



SHOUT OUT FROM SHARI

July - A Big Shout Out to Jean Parks for being kind enough to change out our OHCE information boards. Are you excited about the Tulsa County Free Fair this month? If not, you should be! I hope everyone has been busy making things to enter in the fair. It is our hope that this will be one of the best Fair there's ever been. Please invite your neighbors and friends to enter items in the fair this year. Invite them to come to our Membership Tea! This year will be a little different than years past...so please remember to be flexible and be kind to one another and especially our guests! July is about celebrating our country - so come on out to the County Fair...you might even win a blue ribbon! **August** - Wow, the Summer is almost gone! A Big Shout Out to everyone who volunteered during the Tulsa County Fair. We had a lot of entries and we met a lot of new people! Congratulations to all of you that won ribbons this year. Ashlee Overall and I are looking forward to representing Tulsa County at the OHCE State Meeting this year. I hope our groups bring back a lot of awards for writing reports. We will go and learn as much as we can to come back and share with everyone! I look forward to seeing everyone at our Fall Business meeting.

Nuts About OHCE! *Shari*



Nominating Committee: The Nominating Committee will be reaching out to each group to see who they recommend for the openings that are available for the coming 2022 year. The offices of President, Vice President and Treasurer are open. All of the Committees are now ready for new Chairmans. Please reach out to your Group President and let them know if you are interested in any of these positions.

WHAT'S HAPPENING



July:

- 5: Independence Day – Extension Office Closed
- 12: Chat and Create 10:30 Auditorium
- **Tulsa County Fair** Please note the schedule changes****
- To be held at the River Spirit Expo building, lower level.**
- 20 4:00 to 7:00 pm, Accepting Entries
- 21 1:00 pm, Fair Judging-closed to the public
- 22-23 10:00 am-7:00 pm, Tulsa County Fair, OHCE Gift Shop
- 23 2:00 to 4:00 pm, OHCE Membership Tea.
- 23 4:00 to 7:00 pm, Fair Entry Release and pick up.

August:

- 1-3: OHCE State Conference, Champion Convention Center, OKC
- 9: Chat and Create 10:30 Auditorium
- 23: Chat and Create 10:30 Auditorium
- 25: **WEDNESDAY:** Leader Lesson training, 10:00 at NE Tech Center, 1901 N. Hwy. 88, Claremore. Please send 4 members from each group.

Membership Committee:

JULY - Thank you to everyone that came to the Rummage Sale last month. We had a lot of items. We were able to donate items to the Loaves and Fishes Ministry AND we were able to give a lot to the Tulsa County Emergency Shelter. Great job everyone!

AUGUST - Thank You to all of the Membership Committee for helping with the Membership Tea at the Tulsa County Fair. We were able to honor a lot of our members and give them recognition for their years of service to our organization. The Membership Committee is working on some fun things to do in the Fall that you can invite your friends to. (Like BUNCO!) Please be sure to check with your groups to find out the information.

Oklahoma Home and Community Education (OHCE), consists of six groups that meet in and around Tulsa. The groups meet once a month, at various times. The groups meet in at libraries, churches or community centers. To start or join a group in your neighborhood or community, call the Tulsa County OSU Extension Office at 918-746-3706.



OHCE UPDATES



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Inside your home can help you begin small changes that will add up to big savings during the summer months. Items to consider: HE detergents that are formulated to deliver optimal cleaning performance, particularly in cold water; proper storage in your refrigerator can reduce overall energy consumption (fridges with the freezer on top are more efficient than the side-by-side models); blackout or room-darkening curtains; CFL (compact fluorescent light) or LED (light-emitting diode) bulbs; ceiling fans (fan blades should spin counter-clockwise on low to help circulate the air flow in your home allowing the thermostat to not be set so expensively low in the hot summer months.

“Thought Questions” for July and August:

- 1.) “Can Resource Management help you create a comprehensive profile on your home to discover how you can improve your home’s efficiency and overall comfort level?”
- 2.) “Does Resource Management encourage shifting electricity use June through October to lower cost hours – all hours EXCEPT 2 p.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday?”

~Dolores Williams, Resource Management Chairperson

We know our mental health is all a part of Healthy Living.

5 research-based tips for emerging from pandemic life.

<https://theconversation.com/going-beyond-back-to-normal-5-research-based-tips-for-emerging-from-pandemic-life-161467>

~Charline Romine, Healthy Living Committee Chairman



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Michelle Bonicelli

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FAMILY ISSUES

As you know each year we gather items for the Tulsa County Shelter to donate at our Christmas Party. This year I thought it might be good to begin a little early. So, each month we will present a list of items that are needed. Please keep all items you do buy until we meet for our Holiday Party December 1, 2021. Below is the list for Women. Keep it handy and if you see sales you can buy more than one. The next four months there will be a different list for a different section of the shelter. As always thank you so much for your generosity.

~ Donna Spielman - Chair

- July—Women’s needs
- August—Baby’s needs
- September—Children’s needs
- October—Men’s needs
- November—Household Items

July Suggestions:

1. Purses
2. Wallets
3. Makeup & Makeup Remover
4. Nail polish & nail polish remover
5. Q-tips & cotton balls
6. Bras—especially large sizes