



Date Marking: Why it is so important!

Why do we need to date mark foods?

Ready-to-eat foods are required to be date marked to reduce the growth of *Listeria monocytogenes*. This organism is dangerous because it grows at refrigerator temperatures. It is harmful to the very young, the very old and pregnant women (and their unborn babies)

What needs to be date marked?

Ready-to-eat foods, time-temperature controlled for safety (TCS) foods, such as lunch meats, soft cheeses, house-made salads (Note: commercially prepared salads and dressings are exempt from date marking requirements)

How long can I hold date marked items?

Date marked products can be held for 7 days, and then must be discarded (preparation day must be counted as day 1)

How does freezing a date marked food change the date marking?

Any days remaining in the 7 days allowed for holding under refrigeration must be marked on the item as “consume by” when removed from the freezer

