

Autism & Food Safety



Food poisoning can make your body feel very sick. You might throw up or have diarrhea. It happens when you eat food that has gone bad. This guide helps you know what's safe to eat, understand expiration dates, and spot signs of spoiled food.

1. Understand Expiration Dates



Foods often have different types of dates listed on them.

Type	What it Means
"Use By"	Eat the food before this date. Food may be unsafe after this date.
"Best Before"	Quality is best before this date, but food may still be safe a few days after.
"Sell By"	For stores, buy before this date. Check "Use By" before eating.

Tip: Always check the expiration date, which is usually located on the top, bottom, or side of the package or container.

2. How to Tell if Food Is Unsafe



Even before the expiration date, food can go bad. Look, smell, and touch (carefully):

Sign	What It Means
Strange smell	Sour, rotten, or ammonia-like odors → do not eat.
Mold	Green, white, black, or fuzzy spots → throw away.
Texture change	Slimy, sticky, or mushy (not normal) → do not eat.
Discoloration	Unusual browning or gray → be cautious.
Gas/bloated packaging	Cans, jars, or meat packaging puffed up → do not eat.

3. Safe Food Storage



Food Type	How to Store
Meat & fish	Refrigerate immediately. Eat or freeze before "Use By" date.
Dairy	Keep cold. Check smell and consistency.
Fruits & vegetables	Refrigerate or keep in cool, dry place. Wash before eating.
Canned / dry goods	Store in a cool, dry cupboard. Check for dents or bulging cans.
Leftovers	Eat within 2–3 days. Reheat thoroughly.

Helpful Hints: Keep older foods in front so you use them first.

4. Handling Food Safely



- Wash hands with soap before and after eating or preparing food.
- Wash produce to remove dirt and bacteria.
- Do not allow raw and cooked foods to touch.
- Cook thoroughly (especially meat, eggs, and fish).
- Keep food cold (<4°C / 40°F) or hot (>60°C / 140°F).
- Do not thaw and re-freeze food.



TIP

If in doubt, throw it out.
It's safer than risking food poisoning.

