



Republic of the Philippines
Department of Health
FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION



29 DEC 2015

FDA ADVISORY
No. **2015-096**

SUBJECT: Basic Consumer Tips In Buying Processed Food Products For The Holidays

This Christmas and New Year Season, there is a high public demand for food products as Filipino families traditionally celebrate through preparation of meals for festivities. Unwary consumers might succumb to unscrupulous food business operators selling compromised, improperly handled and stored, misbranded and adulterated food products.

In this regard, the FDA advises the consumers to follow these basic consumer tips in buying food products for the holidays to avoid eating unsafe and unwholesome food products:

1) Check for the following items on the labeling information of food products

- a. Labels must consist of the following information:
 - Brand name and Product name
 - Net content/weight
 - List of Ingredients
 - Name of manufacturer/repacker/distributor/importer
 - Expiry or expiration date/consume ~~y~~-before-date/use-by-date
 - Lot identification code
 - Nutrition Information
 - Storage condition (e.g. for those needing storage beyond the normal room temperature)
 - Food Allergen information (e.g. nuts, milk, crustaceans, etc.)
 - Directions for Use (as applicable).
- b. Labels at all times must not be tampered (e.g. Cutting out of label details, Sticking-on of new Expiration Date, Rubbed-off Information)
- c. Deficiencies in labeling information and presence of tampering should serve as warning to consumers in choosing food products.



2) Check the integrity of the packaging and seal of food products

Packaging materials are intended to protect the safety and quality of a product thus it is imperative that integrity of the product must be intact within the claimed shelf-life of the product. Check for the following:

- Canned goods must not be dented, rusted and bulging
- Soft packaging materials such as plastics, foils, aluminum wraps must at all times be free from tear and perforations
- Metal bottle caps must be free from rust
- Glass bottles must be intact and without cracks


3) Check the environment from where the food products are being sold

Food products must at all times be sold under optimal hygienic conditions. The probability of cross contamination from hazards such as biological, chemical and microbiological must be reduced, minimized and eliminated. In addition, products intended to be stored with their optimal conditions must be observed.

- Perishable products must be separated from non-perishables to prevent cross contamination
- Frozen and refrigerated products must be kept frozen or stored in refrigeration
- Area of selling must at all times be free from pests such as rodents, insects, etc.
- Buy only from reputable sources such as those with valid sanitation permits

Consumers are hereby advised to be more vigilant and conscious in buying food products in the market to avoid health and safety issues.

For more information and inquiries, kindly email us at info@fda.gov.ph. To report unregistered food products or establishments selling unregistered food products, kindly email us via report@fda.gov.ph.


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