



Food Quality Labs

protecting your quality name

Shelf-life Studies

Shelf-life—what is it?

Shelf life refers to the length of time that a food product under designated storage conditions remains edible and safe for consumption. This is important so that stores can determine when a product should be pulled from the shelf. Food packages increasingly have “good until...” dates.

What are Shelf-Life Studies?

Shelf-life studies measure the stability of food over a period of time under specified storage conditions. These studies utilize testing methodologies to verify the shelf-life of a given food product.

What testing may be required?

Biological testing for the presence of specific pathogens and chemistry testing for moisture and pH levels are typical. The frequency of testing will be determined in large part by the expected shelf-life of the product—the longer the shelf-life, the longer between testing periods. Testing will be performed until the end of the study time or the food becomes unsafe.

How should samples be submitted?

For each food type, there should be one separately sealed package for each time-test-point in the study.

How do I determine what testing and frequency are best for my products?

Contact our laboratory and ask to speak to our Microbiology department. They will be pleased to assist in crafting a study that is the most cost-effective while providing your needed testing.

What is ASLT?

Accelerated Shelf-Life Testing (ASLT) is occasionally used to determine the shelf-life of a food product in less time than a standard shelf-life study requires. Unless the physical properties of all the ingredients at a higher-than-normal storage temperature are *well* understood, ASLT will likely indicate an incorrect shelf-life. We do not perform ASLT for that reason.

How do I get started?

Call the lab at (503)297-3636 or 800 977-3636 or email info@foodqualitylabs.com