



What Does Shelf-Life Actually Mean?

Traditionally, shelf-life was used to describe the period during which food remains safe for consumption. Over the years this term was adopted for use with medicines and devices such as point-of-care tests.

Shelf Life

noun:

"the length of time for which an item remains useable, fit for consumption, or sellable."

Essentially, the term describes how long an item can be stored, according to the manufacturer's prescribed conditions, to maintain its optimal quality and effectiveness. It is often a recommendation and not a hard deadline.

How is shelf-life applied?

During product validation, prior to launch, product is stored according to given criteria (temperature and humidity), and performance is assessed at different time intervals to define the appropriate shelf-life. Often manufacturers will continue these stability studies following product launch to increase the shelf life of future product lots, a common process to permit product to be launched earlier since shelf-life stability studies do need to be performed over numerous months.

Is product with a shorter shelf-life of a lesser quality?

Not at all. Product quality is the same regardless of whether product has a shelf-life of 6 months versus a shelf-life of 24 months. It just means that not enough time has gone by to allow the manufacturer to assess the stability of the product over a longer time period or they made the decision not to perform the additional studies, perhaps because the market does not demand it. The test accuracy is the same regardless of whether the test has one month's shelf-life remaining from the date of use or twenty four months.

How does this relate to diagnostic, point-of-care or general lateral flow tests?

Wondfo USA strives to provide customers with the longest shelf-life possible, for ease of storage and peace of mind. In order to balance ideal storage needs with timely market launches that meet critical public health, clinical and other diagnostic needs, our approach is to launch products with a minimum shelf-life while continuously building on storage time frames with each and every future lot.

Need advice on storing your products or want to learn more about the shelf-life of our products? Get in touch today.

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