

# FOOD LABELS WHAT DO THEY NEED?



## 1 Nutrition information panel

Most packaged foods must have a nutrition information panel. The information must be presented in a standard format which shows the amount per serve and per 100g (or 100ml if liquid) of the food.

There are a few exceptions to requiring a nutrition information panel such as:

- very small packages which are about the size of a larger chewing gum packet
- foods with no significant nutritional value (such as a single herb or spice), tea, and coffee
- foods sold unpackaged (unless a nutrition claim is made)
- foods made and packaged at the point of sale, for example bread made in a local bakery.

## 2 Name or description of the food

Foods must be labelled with an accurate name or description, for example fruit yoghurt must contain fruit.

## 3 Recall information

Food labels must have the name and business address in Australia or New Zealand of the manufacturer or importer, as well as the lot identification of the food (or date coding). This makes food recalls, on the rare occasion that they are necessary, more efficient and effective.

## 4 Information for allergy sufferers

Foods such as peanuts, tree nuts (e.g. cashews, almonds, walnuts), shellfish, finned fish, milk, eggs, sesame and soybeans and their products, when present in food, may cause severe allergic reactions and must be declared on the label however small the amount. Gluten is also included in this list but the caution is more for those with Coeliac Disease rather than allergy. In addition, foods containing sulphite preservatives must be labelled as containing sulphites if they have 10 milligrams per kilogram or more of added sulphites. This is the level that may trigger asthma attacks in some asthmatics. Bold type for each time an allergen appears in the ingredient list is recommended.

## 5 Ingredient list

Ingredients must be listed in descending order (by in-going weight). This means that when the food was manufactured the first ingredient listed contributed the largest amount and the last ingredient listed contributed the least, compared to the other ingredients.

## 6 Date marking

Foods with a shelf life of less than two years must have a 'best before' date. It may still be safe to eat those foods after the best before date but they may have lost quality and some nutritional value. Those foods that should not be consumed after a certain date for health and safety reasons must have a 'use by' date. An exception is bread which can be labelled with a 'baked on' or 'baked for' date if its shelf life is less than seven days.

## 7 Labels must tell the truth

Suppliers must label food products with accurate weights and measures information. Weights and measures declarations are regulated by fair trading laws and food laws that require that labels do not misinform through false, misleading or deceptive representations.

For example, a food with a picture of strawberries on the label must contain strawberries.

## 8 Food additives

All food additives must have a specific use, must have been assessed and approved by FSANZ for safety and must be used in the lowest possible quantity that will achieve their purpose. Food additives must be identified, usually by a number, and included in the ingredients list. This allows those people that may be sensitive to food additives to avoid them.

## 9 Legibility requirements

Any labelling requirement must be legible, prominent, and distinct from the background and in English. The size of the type in warning statements must be at least 3mm high, except on very small packages.

## 10 Directions for use and storage

Where specific storage conditions are required in order for a product to keep until its 'best before' or 'use by' date, manufacturers must include this information on the label. For example, 'This yoghurt should be kept refrigerated at or below 4°C'.

## Nutrition information table example

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Servings per package: 3 Serving Size: 150g		
	Quantity per Serving	Quantity per 100g
Energy	608kJ	405kJ
Protein	4.2g	2.8g
Fat, total	7.4g	4.9g
- Saturated	4.5g	3.0g
Carbohydrated, total	18.6g	12.4g
- Sugars	18.6g	12.4g
Sodium	90mg	60mg
<small>*Percentage of recommended dietary intake</small>		
Ingredients: Whole milk, concentrated skim milk, sugar, banana (8%), strawberry (6%), grape (4%), peach (2%), pineapple (2%), gelatine,culture, thickener (1442).		
All quantities above are averages		



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