



RURAL CITY OF
WANGARATTA

Food labelling requirements

Why do we have food labels?

Food labels provide you with enough information to make an informed choice when you buy food. Labels list information including:

- a description of the food
- ingredients
- nutritional information
- best before or use-by dates
- storage and preparation directions
- warnings about ingredients known to cause allergic reactions.
- Net volume or weight

Who develops Australian food standards?

Food Standards Australia and New Zealand (FSANZ) develops food standards for the Australian and New Zealand food industries.

For more information on food labelling requirements in Australia, read Part 1.2 of the [Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code](#) (the Code).

Food labelling requirements

The following information outlines general food labelling requirements contained in the Code.

Unless an exemption applies, the following information must be included on labels for food packages for retail sale or for catering purposes.

Name or description of the food

Food package labels must include a name or a description of the food. This name or description should be clear enough so you can tell it apart from other foods.

If there is a prescribed name for the food in the Code this must be included on the label. If there is no prescribed name for a food, the label must include a name or description that clearly states the true nature of the food.

In accordance with food laws, labels must tell the truth and manufacturers must not represent foods in a false, misleading or deceptive way.

Name and business address for an Australia or New Zealand supplier

The supplier's name and their Australian or New Zealand business address is required on food package labels. The term 'supplier' includes the packer, manufacturer, vendor (the business selling the food) or importer (the business bringing the food into Australia). The business address must be a physical address and not a post office box.

Mandatory warning and advisory statements and declarations

To protect your health and safety the Code requires that certain information be provided about some foods.

Prescribed warning and advisory statements are specified in Standard 1.2.3 – Mandatory Warning and Advisory Statements and Declarations and elsewhere in the new Code.

Refer to the FSANZ fact sheets and user guide for more on warning and advisory declarations.

Ingredient listing

Unless specifically exempted, food package labels must list all:

- ingredients (this means any substance, including a food additive, used in the preparation, manufacture or handling of a food)
- compound ingredients (an ingredient made up of 2 or more ingredients, such as spaghetti which is made up of flour, egg and water).

Ingredients and compound ingredients must be listed in descending order of their ingoing weight at the time the food is manufactured. There are limited exceptions to this.

The names of ingredients should be sufficiently detailed to describe the ingredient ensure they are not false, misleading or deceptive, or likely to mislead or deceive.

For guidance on the labelling of ingredients see FSANZ's user guide on ingredient labelling. Additional guidance on the use and labelling of food additives is included in FSANZ's user guide on food additives.

Date marking

Packaged foods that have a shelf life of 2 years or less must be date marked with either a:

- best before date – this means the food may still be safe to eat but may have lost some of its quality
- use-by date – this means a food is not safe to eat after a certain date. Food labelled with a use-by date cannot be sold after that date.

Lot identification

A lot identification is used to identify:

- the batch from which the food was manufactured
- where the food was packed and/or prepared.

This information is especially important if there is a food safety issue which leads to a food recall.

A date mark and the supplier's address details are generally enough to meet this requirement.

Some food items are exempt from lot identification, including:

- individual portions of ice cream/ice confection
- food in small packages when the bulk packages or container in which the food is stored or displayed for sale includes lot identification.

Directions for use or storage

Food labels must include directions for use and storage if the possible threat to your health and safety is greater than if you didn't have this information.

Following these directions keeps the food safe until its use-by date. Examples of such directions are 'refrigerate after opening' or 'store away from sunlight'.

Nutrition information panel

The nutrition information panel details the amount of nutrients in the food, including:

- energy (kilojoules or calories)
- protein
- fat
- saturated fat
- carbohydrate
- sugars
- sodium (salt).

Information must be presented in a standard format which shows the average amount per serve and per 100 g (or 100 mL if liquid) of the food. Refer to FSANZ for additional information on Standard 1.2.8 and nutrition information requirements.

Percentage labelling

Certain packaged foods labels must show the percentages of the 'characterising' ingredients in the food product, if the key ingredient is mentioned in the food description.

For example, if yoghurt is called 'strawberry yoghurt' then the amount of strawberries within the yoghurt must be listed as a percentage in the ingredient list.

Refer to FSANZ for information on Standard 1.2.10 – Characterising Ingredients and Components of Food.

Country of origin

Food package labels must specify the country in which the food was made or produced or specify the product is made from local or imported ingredients.

This provision does not apply to food produced in or imported into New Zealand.

Legibility requirements

Labels must be clear, in full view and in English. The type size of warning statements must be no less than 3 mm high or not less than 1.5 mm for small packages.

FSANZ's user guide on legibility requirements for food labels contains more information.

Other labelling requirements

Visit the [FSANZ website](#) for information on the following additional labelling requirements:

- health claims (Standard 1.1.3, clause 1)

- labelling of certain milk products and royal jelly (Standard 1.2.3, clauses 3)
- infant formula labelling (Standard 2.9.1)
- nutrition claims (Standard 1.2.8)
- labelling of vitamin and mineral content (Standard 1.3.2)
- labelling of genetically modified food (Standard 1.5.2)
- irradiated food (exposed to radiation) or food containing ingredients that have been irradiated (Standard 1.5.3)
- novel foods (Standard 1.5.1).

Exemptions from labelling requirements

The following foods for retail sale or for catering purposes do not generally require a food label:

- food not in a package
- food in an inner package not designed for sale without an outer package, other than individual portion packs which contain certain substances which must be declared either verbally or in writing
- food made and packaged from the premises from which it is sold
- food packaged in the presence of the buyer
- whole or cut fresh fruit and vegetables (except sprouting seeds or similar products) in packages through which you can see the nature or quality of the fruit or vegetables
- food delivered packaged and ready to eat at the request of the buyer
- food sold at a fundraising event.

Even when exempt from bearing a label, the Code requires that certain information about a food be available to you, either verbally or in writing, at the point of sale.

Allergic reactions – mandatory warnings, advisory statements and declarations

Some food for sale can cause allergic reactions in susceptible individuals. It is for this reason that certain food must have mandatory warnings, advisory statements and/or declarations when:

- given to a buyer on request
- displayed next to the food
- included on the packaging.

Declarations

If a food product contains any of the following substances then a declaration must be made:

- cereals containing gluten and their products, namely, wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt and their hybridised strains
- fish and fish products
- crustacea (shellfish, for example prawns) and associated products
- egg and egg products

- milk and milk products
- peanuts and soybeans and their products
- tree nuts and sesame seeds and their products other than coconut
- added sulphites in concentrations of 10 mg/kg or more.

Mandatory Advisory statements and mandatory warning

Labels must bear warning and advisory statements and declarations as prescribed in the Code, where necessary.

Mandatory advisory statements

Mandatory advisory statements, as set out in table the table below, must be displayed on the label, or for products that are exempt from full labelling (see section 3.1), displayed on or in connection with the display of the food or provided to the purchaser upon request.

Food product	Advisory Statement required
Bee pollen presented as a food, or a food containing bee pollen as an ingredient.	Statement to the effect that the product contains bee pollen which can cause severe allergic reactions.
Cereal-based beverages, where these foods contain no more than 2.5% <i>m/m</i> fat and less than 3% <i>m/m</i> protein, or less than 3% <i>m/m</i> protein only.	Statement to the effect that the product is not suitable as a complete milk replacement for children under the age of 5 years.
Evaporated and dried products made from cereals, where these foods contain no more than 2.5% <i>m/m</i> fat and less than 3% <i>m/m</i> protein, or less than 3% <i>m/m</i> protein only, as reconstituted according to directions for direct consumption.	
Evaporated milks, dried milks and equivalent products made from soy or cereals, where these foods contain no more than 2.5% <i>m/m</i> fat as reconstituted according to directions for direct consumption.	Statement to the effect that the product is not suitable as a complete milk replacement for children under the age of 2 years.
Food containing aspartame or aspartame-acesulphame salt.	Statement to the effect that the product contains phenylalanine.
Food containing quinine.	Statement to the effect that the product contains quinine.
Food containing guarana or extracts of guarana.	Statement to the effect that the product contains caffeine.
Foods containing phytosterols, phytostanols or their esters.	Statements to the effect that - <input type="checkbox"/> when consuming this product, it should be consumed as part of a healthy diet; <input type="checkbox"/> this product may not be suitable for children under the age of 5 years and pregnant or lactating women; and <input type="checkbox"/> plant sterols do not provide additional benefits when consumed in excess of 3 grams per day.
Kola beverages containing added caffeine, or food containing a kola beverage containing added caffeine as an ingredient.	Statement to the effect that the product contains caffeine.
Milk, and beverages made from soy or cereals, where these foods contain no more than 2.5% <i>m/m</i> fat.	Statement to the effect that the product is not suitable as a complete milk food for children under the age of 2 years.
Propolis presented as a food, or food containing propolis as an ingredient.	Statement to the effect that the product contains propolis which can cause severe allergic reactions.
Unpasteurised egg products.	Statement to the effect that the product is unpasteurised.
Unpasteurised milk and unpasteurised liquid milk products.	Statement to the effect that the product has not been pasteurised.

Mandatory warning statements

Royal jelly or food containing royal jelly must be labelled with a specific warning statement as set out in the Code, or for products that are exempt from full labelling, displayed on or in connection with the display of the food.

The required statement is:

'This product contains royal jelly which has been reported to cause severe allergic reactions and in rare cases, fatalities, especially in asthma and allergy sufferers'.

Mandatory declarations

Mandatory declarations of the presence of the following substances in food must be declared on a label.

Listing any of the following foods in the ingredient list is sufficient to satisfy this requirement:

- added sulphites in concentrations of 10 mg/kg or more.
- cereals containing gluten and their products, namely, wheat, rye, barley, oats and spelt and their hybridised strains, other than when these products are present in beer and spirits
- crustacea and their products
- egg and egg products
- fish and fish products
- milk and milk products
- peanuts and peanut products
- sesame seeds and sesame seed products
- soybeans and soybean products
- tree nuts and tree nut products (does not include coconut).

Further information

Visit the [FSANZ website](#) to view:

- the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code
- user guides
- fact sheets.

Remember

Food labels are an important source of information, including what is in the food you buy, where it has come from, and how best to store it.