



What's on a Food Label?

General Food Labelling Requirements under the Food Standards Code

The New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) is responsible for the implementation of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Food Standards Code) which took full effect on 20 December 2002. Food sold in New Zealand must be labelled in accordance with the Food Standards Code. The NZFSA has designed a series of fact sheets as basic guides to understanding New Zealand's food labelling and compositional requirements for consumers and industry. The full legal requirements, including exemptions to the general rules and explanations, are set out in the Food Standards Code. For information and copies of New Zealand's food legislation, including a link to the Food Standards Code, visit our website at www.nzfsa.govt.nz.

What food products require a label?

- Most food for sale in New Zealand must be clearly labelled in English (other languages can be used in addition to English, as long as they do not contradict the information).
- Complete food labels are not required for:
 - Food packaged in the presence of the purchaser
 - Ready to eat delivered food
 - Whole or cut fresh fruit and vegetables in transparent packages
 - Food sold at a fundraising event
 - Food not in a package
 - Food in an inner package not designed for sale without the outer package
- Specific health and safety information about some food products must be given to consumers even when a complete label is not required (for example the presence of caffeine and allergenic substances). (See below and also refer to the NZFSA's fact sheet 'What's on a Food label? Allergen Labelling and Warning/Advisory Statements').
- Additional labelling statements may be required under the individual food product standards specified in the Food Standards Code.

What must be on a food label? (Standard 1.2.2 - 1.2.10)

Labels must include the following information:

- **The name of the food:** Food products must be accurately named and/or described on the label. If a name is specified for the food in the Food Standards Code then this name must be used.
- **Lot identification:** This is information that clearly indicates the premises where the food was packaged and/or prepared and the batch from which it came, to assist should there be a food recall. A date mark and suppliers address may be sufficient.
- **Name and address:** The supplier's name and business (street) address in New Zealand or Australia. (Note: 'Supplier' includes packer, manufacturer, vendor or importer of the food).
- **Mandatory warning statements, advisory statements and declarations for certain ingredients/substances:** Some products must have special advisory and warning statements about the food or ingredients/substances in a food (e.g. food containing unpasteurised egg must advise/state that the product contains unpasteurised egg and foods containing royal jelly must include a specific warning statement). This information must be available even where a complete label is not required. Warning statements must appear on labels in 3mm type (1.5mm for small packages).
- **Mandatory declaration of certain ingredients/substances:** The presence of common food allergens and food/ingredients that commonly cause food intolerances (e.g. peanuts, gluten) must be declared on food labels, or where a complete label is not required the information must be available to the consumer.

- **Ingredient list:** All ingredients must be listed by their common name, a description or, where specified in the Food Standards Code, the generic name, in descending order of in-going weight. Ingredients are any substances used in the preparation, manufacture and handling of a food and include food additives, compound ingredients (any ingredient that is itself made up of two or more ingredients), and added water.
- **Food additives:** The class name of the additive (where specified in the Food Standards Code) followed by the additives specific name or code number must be declared. Where the additive is a vitamin or mineral the class name 'vitamin' or 'mineral' may be used.
- **Date marking:** Most packaged foods with a shelf life of less than two years must have one of the following date marks:
 - **'Use By'** dates, which relate to food safety. Foods with a 'Use By' date should not be consumed after the date indicated for health and safety reasons. Food cannot be sold beyond their 'Use By' date.
 - **'Best Before'** dates, which relate to quality. Foods should be consumed by their 'Best Before' date to ensure quality. Foods can be sold beyond their 'Best Before' date provided it is still fit for consumption.
 - **'Baked On'** and **'Baked For'** dates can be used for breads with a shelf life of less than 7 days.
- **Directions for use and storage:** Storage instructions must be provided where necessary to ensure that the food will keep for the period indicated by the date mark and/or where the consumer should be aware of any storage and use requirements necessary to ensure the food safety.
- **Nutrition Information Panel:** The nutritional information panel (NIP) must be set out specifically as shown below and is required on most packaged food products. Where average quantities or

minimum/maximum quantities are given this must be indicated in the NIP.

Example of a blank Nutrition Information Panel

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Servings per package: (insert number of servings)		
Serving size: g (or mL or other units as appropriate)		
	Quantity per Serving	Quantity per 100g (or 100mL)
Energy	kJ (Cal)	kJ (Cal)
Protein	g	g
Fat, total	g	g
- saturated	g	g
Carbohydrate	g	g
sugars	g	g
Sodium	mg (mmol)	mg (mmol)
(insert any other nutrient or biologically active substance to be declared)	g, mg, µg (or other units as appropriate)	g, mg, µg (or other units as appropriate)

- **Percentage labelling:** The percentage of the characterising ingredients, and/or components of most food products must be indicated on the label.
- **Net content** is required under the Weights and Measures Regulations 1999.

Stock-in-trade provisions (Standard 1.1.1)

Food products manufactured and labelled under the Food Regulations 1984 (or the previous Australian Food Standards Code) before 20 December 2002 can continue to be sold to the end of their shelf life. This 'stock-in-trade' provision applies until 20 December 2003 for foods with a shelf life less than 12 months and until 20 December 2004 for those foods with a shelf life greater than 12 months.

PURPOSE OF THE INFORMATION, AND DISCLAIMER

The information contained in this 'fact sheet' is provided for the purpose of giving a general understanding of the New Zealand food labelling compositional requirements to both consumers and industry personnel. It is not a professional commentary on the law nor is it provided as a basis of any decision making to be undertaken by the reader. It is general guidance only.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained is accurate, however general information by its very nature cannot cover every specific to the degree of accuracy expected in the provision in professional advice. In addition, the Code will be forever changing and it is not intended to amend this general guidance every time the Code is amended. Amendments to the guidance contained in this document will be restricted to major developments only. Reliance should be placed on the wording of the legislation itself. This is available at the NZFSA website at www.nzfsa.govt.nz or from any government bookshop.

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For further information on this topic contact:

New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA)

Hotline: 0800 NZFSA1 (0800 693 721)
www.nzfsa.govt.nz
 Email: info@NZFSA.govt.nz
 PO Box 2835
 WELLINGTON

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ)

Advice Line: 0800 441 571
www.foodstandards.govt.nz
 Email: advice@foodstandards.gov.au

The Public Health Unit at your local District Health Board

