

General Labelling Requirements – What Must Appear?

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



- 4 Please note that in this case a warning and advisory statement is not required as the name of the food clearly indicates the contents.
- 9 Please note that this particular product does not require special directions for use or storage.

1 Name of the food [Standard 1.2.2]

Package foods must be labelled with a name or a description that will not mislead consumers. The Food Standards Code defines some foods with a *prescribed name* and that name must appear on the label e.g. honey.

2 Lot identification [Standard 1.2.2]

Food labels must contain information identifying the premises where the food was packed or prepared and the lot or batch. The lot is required on packaged food to help in case of a food recall. A lot number is to identify the manufacturing batch. Requirements are met if the product is properly date marked and shows the business address of the manufacturer.

3 Name and business address in Australia [Standard 1.2.2]

The label must include the name and business address of the manufacturer, packer, vendor or importer for food recall and contact purposes. The address must include the street number, the street name, the town or suburb and, the state or territory. A post office box address is not sufficient.

4 Mandatory warning and advisory statements and declarations [Standard 1.2.3]

Mandatory advisory and warning information is needed on:

- Foods containing added phytosterols esters or tall oil phytosterols,
- Unpasteurised milk and unpasteurised liquid milk products,
- Unpasteurised egg products,
- Some milk, evaporated or dried milk and some equivalent beverages or products made from soy or cereals.

Mandatory advisory statements are needed on the following foods or *when present as an ingredient in food*:

- Bee pollen or propolis,
- Cereal based beverages,
- Kola drinks with added caffeine,
- Aspartame,
- Quinine,
- Guarana or extracts of guarana,
- Lactitol, maltitol, xylitol, mannitol, sorbitol, erythritol, isomaltol, and polydextrose above certain limit.

5 Ingredient listing [Standard 1.2.3, Standard 1.2.4]

All ingredients and compound ingredients (including food additives) used in the manufacture of the food must be on the label. A compound ingredient means an ingredient of a food that is made up of two or more ingredients, e.g. spaghetti, which is made up of flour, egg and water.

List ingredients in descending order of ingoing weight, the ingredient present in the greatest proportion is listed first and so on.

Generic listing of ingredients may be used, e.g. herbs, meat, milk protein. However you must be specific about the species of crustacea, type of nut and if oils used are of animal or vegetable origin.

Declaration of certain substances [Standard 1.2.4]

Ingredients that may cause a reaction in consumers must be declared (including when present as a processing aid). These ingredients are:

- Cereals containing gluten,
- Crustacea,
- Egg,
- Fish,
- Caffeine,
- Soybean,
- Milk,
- Tree nuts,
- Sesame seed,
- Peanuts,
- Sulphite additives when present at more than 10mg/kg.

Listing any of the above foods in the ingredient list is sufficient to satisfy this requirement.

6 Date marking [Standard 1.2.5]

Packaged food with a life of 2 years or less must show a date-mark. Laboratory testing or experimenting yourself can determine the date that you can use.

The 'BEST BEFORE' date mark will be used on most packaged foods. A food with a 'BEST BEFORE' date mark can be sold after that date has expired, provided it is safe and suitable for consumption. If you believe that for health and safety reasons a food should not be consumed after a certain date the 'USE BY' date mark must be used. Foods labelled 'USE BY' cannot be sold after the date shown.

7 Nutrition information panel [Standard 1.2.8]

Nutrition information panels generally are on all packaged food. Exceptions are:

- Foods sold at fundraising events,
- Small packages,
- Fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry or fish sold as single ingredients,
- Alcoholic beverages,
- Herbs, herbal infusion and spices,
- Vinegar,
- Salt,
- Tea and coffee,
- Gelatine,
- Defined additives or processing aids,
- Water (including mineral and spring water),
- Jam setting compound,
- Kits for producing alcoholic beverages,
- Kava and sandwiches, rolls, bagels and similar products.

An example of a standard format:

Packet of 4 frozen pies		Nutrition information	
Servings per package - 4 Serving size - 175g			
		Quantity per 175g serving	Quantity per 100g
Example 1	Energy	1615kJ	923kJ
	Protein	25.9g	14.8g
	Fat		
	- Total	20.6g	11.8g
	- Saturated	10.0g	5.76g
	Carbohydrate	23.6g	13.5g
	- Sugars	1.2g	0.7g
	Sodium	471mg	269mg

'Serving size' may be replaced with the words 'slice', 'pack', or 'package' or other common units of measure as appropriate.

The FSANZ website provides an online tool to calculate nutrition information panel values. Go to www.foodstandards.gov.au and type *Nutrition Panel Calculator* into the search box.

8 Characterising ingredients (percentage labelling) [Standard 1.2.10]

Characterising ingredients are declared on the label as a percentage of the final food. 'Characterising ingredients' are in the name of the product or highlighted on the label and is the main ingredient expected to be found in the food. The percentage declaration is calculated on the ingoing weight of the characterising ingredient or component. For example, the characterising ingredient is a 'meat pie' is meat and the food label must state the percentage of meat in the pie, as in this example:

Example

Ingredient label from a "meat pie"

INGREDIENTS

WHEAT FLOUR, MEAT (MINIMUM 25%), WATER, ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE FAT, ONION POWDER, HYDROLYSED VEGETABLE PROTEIN, EGG, THICKENER (410), SUGAR, MINERAL SALT (450), SALT, COLOUR (150a), HERBS, PRESERVATIVE (223).

9 Directions for use or storage [Standard 1.2.6]

Any *storage conditions* that are needed to keep food for the period indicated by the date mark must be shown. For example, Store below 5°C, refrigerate after opening, store in a cool dry place etc.

What Foods are Exempt from Bearing a Label?

Food for retail sale or catering purposes (foods for use in restaurant, schools, canteens, caterers or self-catering institutions for immediate consumption) is exempt from labelling if its:

- Not in a package,
- In an inner package not designed for individual sale,
- Made and packaged on the premises from which it is sold,
- Packaged in the presence of the purchaser,
- Whole or cut fresh fruit and vegetables in packaging that does not obscure the nature or quality (does not include sprouting seeds or similar products),
- Delivered packaged and ready for consumption at the express order of the purchaser,
- Sold at a fundraising event.

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