

Food Labeling Requirements for Retail Food Establishments

Label Requirements

Packaged food must be labeled. Food is packaged if the food establishment bottles, cans, cartons, wraps or bags the product and makes it available for self-service. The label on a food package tells consumers exactly what is inside the package. Food package label information must be written in English. Label information shall include:

- Identity /common name of food
- Ingredient list
- Net quantity of contents
- Business name and address
- Allergens
- Nutrition facts **if required*
- Perishable foods require:
 - Use-By date (7-day shelf life for refrigerated products unless a lab test proves it has a longer shelf life)
 - “Keep Refrigerated” or “Keep Frozen”

Principal display panel

The principal display panel (PDP) is the front of the package and is easily seen by the consumer at the time of purchase. Include the identity and the net quantity of contents on the PDP.

Identity

The identity is the truthful common or usual name of the product. Providing a brand name is voluntary.

- Use a name that is not misleading.
- Use large, bold type.
- Print the name in the middle of the label.

Net quantity of contents

The net quantity of contents is the minimum amount of food contained within a package, not including the weight of the package and packing material.

- Print the net quantity of contents as weight (for solids or semi-solids), volume (for liquids), or count (in limited situations). Examples: NET WT 12 OZ; 64 FL OZ; 6 COUNT.
- Place in the lower third of the PDP with no other information next to or below.
- Use weight for meat, fish, and shellfish labels

Information panel

The information panel is usually found to the right of the PDP. Include the ingredient list, business name and address, and nutrition facts on the information panel.

Ingredient list

- List all ingredients by their common or usual name.
- List all ingredients in descending order (most to least) by weight. If less than 2% by weight, an ingredient can be mentioned at the end of the list, stating "contains 2% or less of ____."
- Include all sub-ingredients. Example: Flour (bleached wheat flour, malt barley, flour, niacin, iron, potassium thiamine, riboflavin).
- Include chemical preservatives and food coloring in descending order (most to least) by weight.

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Major food allergens

Allergen labeling is required for packaged food products that contain any of the major food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, soy, and sesame.

Identify by name any major food allergens in the product as part of the ingredient list. This must include protein derived from a major food allergen. Use one of the following options:

1. List the common or usual name of the food source, followed by the name of the allergen in parentheses. Example: flour (wheat), whey (milk).

OR

2. After the ingredient list, place the word "Contains:" followed by the food allergen. Example: Contains: wheat, milk.

For tree nuts, declare the specific type of nut. Examples: almonds, coconut, pecans. For fish or crustacean shellfish, declare the species. Examples: walleye, shrimp, lobster.

Business name and address

Print the business name, city, state, and ZIP code of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor. If the business is not listed in the current telephone guide for the city, include the street address.

If the name given is not the actual manufacturer, also state the establishment's relation to the product. Examples: "Manufactured for" or "Distributed by."

*Nutrition facts

A nutrition facts panel is sometimes required. Packaged foods that do not have a nutrient

content claim or health claim may be exempt due to:

- Size of the business.
- How food is sold, served or offered for sale.
- Insignificant amount of nutrients, such as in spices, tea or coffee.

The nutrition facts panel includes information about the serving size, calories and key nutrients of the food. If required, place the nutrition facts panel at the top of the information panel.

Nutrient content claims and health claims

When making a nutrient content claim or health claim, include nutrition facts in the information panel.

- Nutrient content claims indicate the nutritional value of the food. Examples: "low fat," "high in oat bran," or "contains 100 calories."
- Health claims describe the relationship between a food component and a disease or health-related condition. Examples: a brand name including a term such as "healthy," or a heart symbol.

Additional requirements

This fact sheet provides only a brief summary of some federal and state labeling requirements for retail establishments. Some additional label components for retail establishments could include:

- [Gluten-free claim](#)
- Meaningful quality assurance date
- [Country of origin labeling \(COOL\)](#)
- Safe handling instructions
- Grade and size