

Fact Sheet



Food Safety - Food Labelling Requirements

Under the Food Safety Standards all foods for retail sale or for catering purposes are required to have labels that contain certain information for consumers.

These requirements are outlined below; however these do not apply to the following:

- Food that is sold not in a package, or
- Food that is in an inner package that is not designed for sale without the outer package other than individual portion packs which must bear a label containing a declaration of substances, or
- Food that is made and packaged on the premises from which it is sold, or
- Food that is packaged in the presence of the purchaser, or
- Food that is whole or cut fresh fruit and vegetables, except sprouting seeds or other similar products, in packages that do not obscure the nature of the quality of the fruit or vegetables, or
- The food is delivered packaged, and ready for consumption, at the express order of the purchaser, or
- The food is sold at a fund raising event.

Foods for Retail Sale

Food for retail sale must bear a label containing the following information:

- The name of the food
- Lot Identification number, and
- The name and address of the supplier.

An exception to these items may be made in discussion with the Environmental Health Officer and providing the person selling the foods is able to identify where and by whom the food was made.

This does not apply to any foods that are not packaged or foods that are in an inner package where the outer packaging details the required information.

If requested so by the purchaser or the Environmental Health Officer, additional information may need to be supplied about the food, for example, ingredients.

Date Marking

Date marking of food products provides assistance to consumers on the shelf life of a food. Under the code, manufacturers must apply a 'best before' date unless the food needs to be consumed within a certain time frame due to health and safety reasons. In this circumstance the food must be marked with a 'use by' date.

Foods that are marked with a 'best before' date can continue to be sold after this date provided the food is not damaged, deteriorated or perished in anyway.

Foods that are marked with a 'use by' date are not to be sold after this date due to health and safety reasons.

The following food items are not required to have a 'use by date' or a 'best before' date:

- Foods that have a shelf life of two years or longer
- Individual serves of ice-cream or ice confection.
- Food in small packaging with a total surface area of less than 100 sq cm unless the food must be consumed by a certain date for health and safety reasons.

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Ingredient Labelling

All packaged food must include a statement of all ingredients used in the manufacture of the food. This includes all additives such as colours and preservatives, as well as all compound ingredients. There are requirements as to how these need to be detailed on a label for example, all ingredients must be listed in order of quantity, with the ingredient used the most listed first. This now includes water as an ingredient where as in the past it was often listed as 'water added'.

Mandatory Warning & Advisory

Under the new Code certain items must be indicated on the label. These can be in the form of a warning statement, advisory statement or a declaration depending on the risk to consumers.

For further details of which foods require these statements you should refer to the Food Standards Australia New Zealand website which has been listed below.

Nutritional Information

All packaged foods must have a Nutrition Information Panel. This nutrition panel must contain the energy, protein, fat, saturated fat, carbohydrate, sugars and sodium content for that food. It is important to remember that certain claims regarding any information in the nutrition panel may need further information to be supplied. An example of a nutritional panel can be found on the Food Standards website, as well as a Nutrition Panel Calculator to assist in establishing the items required for the panel.

Percentage Labelling of Characterising Ingredients

A characterising ingredient of a food is categorised as a component of the food that:

- Appears in the name of the food; or
- Is associated with the name of a food by the consumer; or
- Is emphasised on the label of a food, either in words, pictures or graphics; or
- Is essential to characterise the food, and to distinguish it from other foods with which it might be confused because of its name or appearance.

These ingredients must be displayed as percentages of that food item. For example, the percentage of both the fruit and nuts in a fruit and nut muesli must be displayed for the purchaser.

Note: This is only a guide. There are some exemptions to many of the above requirements. Further reference should be made to the Campaspe Shire Council labelling guide or the Food Safety Standards located on the Food Standards Australia New Zealand website.

Useful Website:

Food Standards Australia New Zealand
www.foodstandards.gov.au

Want more information?

If you require further information about any matters mentioned in this fact sheet please contact an Environmental Health Officer at Campaspe Shire Council toll free on 1300 666 535