

Food Labeling Guidelines for Packaged Food

Which Food Items Need Labels?

- All packaged food must be labeled.
- Labels must be in English.
- Packaged food include:
 - Items that food establishment bottles, cans, cartons, wraps or bags for off- site sale and consumption, such as in grocery stores or farmer markets.
 - Items that food establishment packages for sale, such as ready-to-eat sandwiches or salad kits, packets of spice blends, bagged and sealed bread, cookies, cakes, donuts, salsa or condiments in tubs or jars.
- Exception: Food selected by customers before bagging or packing do **not** require labels, such as deli meats and pre-made salads, made-to-order sandwiches, whole breads, cookies, cakes, donuts.

Why Do Packaged Food Need Labels?

- To inform consumers exactly what is inside the package.
- To prevent misleading information, misbranding and adulteration of food.
- To trace back to the point of production.

What Information do All Labels Need?

The Big 5:

1. Name of product / Identity.
2. Net quantity.
3. Ingredients, including major food allergens.
4. Business name and address.
5. Nutrition facts – include serving size, nutrients, vitamins, and minerals.

Examples of packaged foods that require labels

(Food packaged by food establishments, Grab-and-Go items)



Examples of foods that do not require labels

(Food selected by customers before bagging or packing)



The Principal Display Panel (PDP)

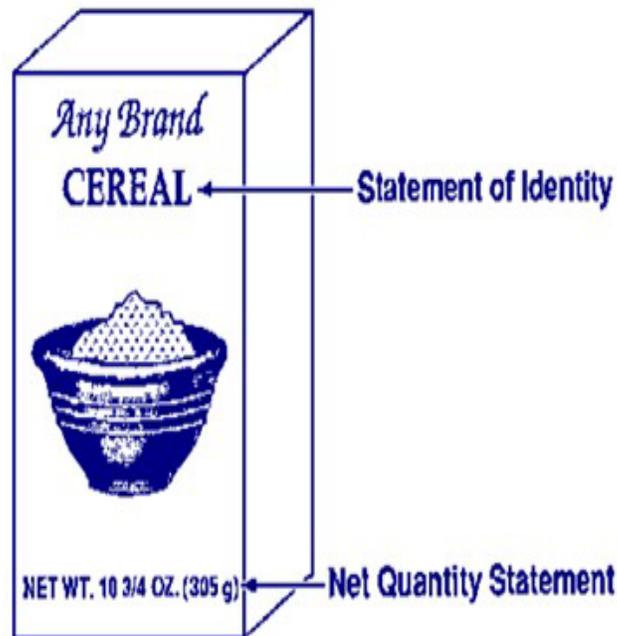
- ❖ The principal display panel (PDP) is the front of the package and is easily seen by the consumer at the time of purchase.
- ❖ The PDP includes the identity and the net quantity of contents.

1. Identity

- The common or usual name of the product contained in the package, such as soup, cereal.
- If no common name is given, use a descriptive name, such as “vanilla wafers”.
- Must be in the middle portion of the PDP’s front label.
- Must be in **bold**, be dominant and stand out from other print and pictures.

2. Net quantity of contents

- The amount of food in the container or package, without the packaging.
- Listed in both U.S. and metric scales.
- Listed either in net weight (ounces, pounds, grams, kilograms...), or net volume (fluid ounce, pints, milliliters, liters...), or net content (number of pieces).
- Located in the lower 30 percent of the PDP, with a minimum height of 1/16 inch.



The Information Panel (IP)

- ❖ The information panel is usually found to the right of the PDP.
- ❖ The IP includes the nutrition facts, ingredient list, and business name and address.

3. Ingredient list

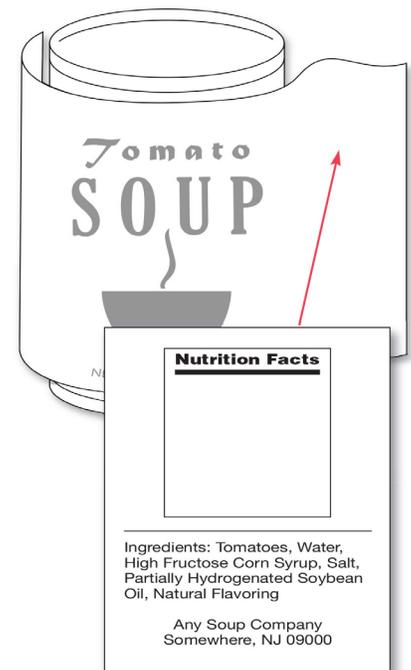
- List all ingredients in descending order (most to least) by weight.
- List all ingredients by their common or usual name, such as sugar (not sucrose).
- If less than 2% by weight, an ingredient can be mentioned at the end of the list, stating "contains 2% or less of ____."
- If present, any of the major 8 food allergens must be listed:
 - Milk
 - Eggs
 - Fish
 - Crustacean shellfish (declare type of fish, such as crab, shrimp, lobster...)
 - Peanuts
 - Tree nuts (declare type of nuts, such as almonds, coconut, etc.)
 - Wheat
 - Soy

4. Nutrition facts

- Include serving size, calories, and key nutrients of the food.
- If required, nutrition facts panel is placed at the top of the IP.
- A nutrition facts panel may be exempt (See **Exemption** section).
- **The WCHD does not assess the accuracy of the Nutrition label. The business is responsible to provide true and accurate information.**

5. Business name and address

- Print the business name, city, state, and ZIP code of the manufacturer, packer, or distributor. Usually located at the bottom of the IP.



Exemption from Nutrition Facts Information

Packaged food may be exempt from providing a nutrition facts panel if:

- ❖ Produced by retailers with annual gross sales of less than \$500,000, or with annual gross sales of foods to consumers of less than \$50,000 per year.
- ❖ Produced by small businesses with fewer than 100 full-time equivalent employees, and fewer than 100,000 units of that product sold in the United States per year.
- ❖ Shipped in bulk and not for sale in bulk to consumers.
- ❖ Contain no significant amount of any nutrient, such as food coloring, spices, tea, coffee.
- ❖ Do not have a nutrient content claim or health claim, such as "low fat", "gluten free", "sugar free", "contains 100 calories", "heart healthy", etc.
- ❖ Raw fruits, vegetables, and fish are exempt

Additional Labeling

Depending on the food preparation process, some types of food need additional labeling information, such as:

- ❖ “Use by” date.
- ❖ Special handling instructions for products requiring refrigeration or freezing.
- ❖ Total percentage of juice on fruit or vegetable juice products.
- ❖ Health warning/disclaimers on raw and unpasteurized products
- ❖ Directions for preparation and use on infant formulas

Resources

- ❖ FDA Food Labeling Guide: <https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/guidance-industry-food-labeling-guide>
- ❖ Washoe County Health District Food Regulations: https://www.washoecounty.gov/health/files/ehs/regulations/Food_Regs_12-08-2021.pdf

Questions? Contact:

- ❖ Washoe County Health District Food Safety Services via email at foodsafety@washoecounty.gov; or,
- ❖ Call the Washoe County Health District Environmental Health Services front desk at 775-328-2434, option 8, to be connected to an inspector.