Basketdrop

Food Labelling Policy 2025©

New legislation, which came into force on 1 October 2021, known as 'Natasha's Law' now also requires businesses to label all food that is pre-packed for direct sale (known as PPDS) with a full list of ingredients and the 14 allergens emphasised in bold.

This new legislation applies to foods packaged on the same site at which they are sold before being ordered, such as pre- packed sandwiches and wraps, and it will also apply to supermarket products, such as cheeses and meat from a deli counter that have been wrapped ready to serve.

Allergens
The allergen content of foods packaged within the European Union are required by law to include allergen information (Regulation No 1169/2011).

This legislation has been in place since December, 2014 and mandates that ingredient lists on food labels have to clearly highlight (for example in bold type) that they contain any of the 14 allergens which include:

- Celery
- Cereals including gluten
- Crustaceans
- Eggs
- Fish
- Lupin
- Milk (Cows)
- Molluscs
- Mustard
- Nuts
- Peanuts
- Sesame seeds
- Soya
- Sulphur dioxide
- (sometimes known as sulphites)

Outside the EU, food labelling laws are different. This means that it is important to check ingredients carefully on food which has been imported from outside the EU or when buying food abroad.

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- Food labels need to be checked every time a product is purchased. Even if foods have previously been considered ‘safe’ manufacturers can change ingredients without notifying consumers.

- Always check the food labels on items that have not been bought before.

- Be vigilant about packaging changes or health claims such as ‘new tastier recipe’. This may indicate that the ingredients have changed.

- If we haven’t purchased a particular food for a while check the ingredients before consumption. They may have changed.

- When buying unpackaged or ‘loose’ food from a café or market always check that there are precautions against cross contamination.

- Foods that have been prepared and pre-packaged on the same premises, such as a sandwich outlet or deli, must now be labelled with a full ingredients list with the 14 allergens emphasised in bold

- If it is not clear from the label, or there is any doubt after verbal communication on the allergen content of a food, then do not take the risk.

- Use Kafoodle when creating ingredients, recipes and updating food labels.

What are food labels and why use them?

Food labels show us information about what foods and drinks contain. It's important you know where to find the information you need and what to look for.

The current laws around food labelling in the UK outline what information must be provided and how that information must be presented. Food labelling should be clear, easy to read and not misleading. But, the nutrition labelling rules do not apply to food supplements or natural mineral waters.

Using these food labels when shopping can help you make healthier choices, for example, by choosing foods and drinks that are:

- Lower in saturated fat
- Lower in sugar
- Lower in salt
- Lower in calories

Understanding front-of-pack labelling

The information must be displayed as either: Energy (kJ and kcal) only or Energy (kJ and kcal), Fat, Saturated fat, Sugars (total sugars) and Salt. This information will be written per 100g/100ml, per portion or both.

The government's recommended format is red, amber, green colour-coding, and percentage reference intakes (RIs), or as it is also known - traffic light labelling!

What are the guidelines for a front-of-pack label?

The table below shows how high, medium, and low levels of fat, saturates, total sugars and salt in foods are classified for front of pack labels (there are different levels for drinks). These levels have been decided by the UK government. The 'per portion' in red is used where portions are 100g or more.

Alongside these traffic lights, the label might also show the amount of these nutrients in a portion of the food or drink and the percentage of your reference intake (RI). If there isn't much room on the label, just energy values will be displayed but the full nutrition information will be available on the back of the pack.

Text	LOW[8]	MEDIUM	HIGH	
Colour code	Green	Amber	Red	
			>25% of RIs	>30% of RIs
Fat	≤ 3.0g/100g	> 3.0g to ≤ 17.5g/100g	> 17.5g/100g	> 21g/portion
Saturates	≤ 1.5g/100g	> 1.5g to ≤ 5.0g/100g	> 5.0g/100g	> 6.0g/portion
(Total) Sugars	≤ 5.0g/100g	> 5.0g to ≤ 22.5g /100g	> 22.5g/100g	> 27g/portion
Salt	≤ 0.3g/100g	> 0.3g to ≤ 1.5g/100g	>1.5g/100g	>1.8g/portion

Understanding back-of-pack labelling

Most pre-packed products must provide a nutrition label on the back of the pack.

By law back of pack nutrition labels must include:	This will be displayed:
Energy	...in calories (kcal) and kilojoules (kJ)
Fat content	...in grams (g)
Saturated fat content	...in grams (g)
Carbohydrate content	...in grams (g)
Sugar content	...in grams (g)
Protein content	...in grams (g)
Salt content	...in grams (g)

This back-of-pack information must be displayed as per 100g or 100ml of the product but may also be displayed as per portion. Generally, this information will be displayed like the example below:

Typical values	100g contains	Each slice (typically 44g) contains
Energy	985kJ	435kJ
	235kcal	105kcal
Fat	1.5g	0.7g
of which saturates	0.3g	0.1g
Carbohydrate	45.5g	20.0g
of which sugars	3.8g	1.7g
Protein	7.7g	3.4g
Salt	1.0	0.4g

What are reference intakes?

Reference intakes (RIs) have been set by European law and are based on an average sized woman doing an average amount of physical activity. RIs are not targets for people to consume but a guideline to help you make healthy dietary choices and balance your daily intake.

The % RI on the label gives you more information about how much of an average adult's daily intake limit of each nutrient is in a portion and will help you put it in the context of a healthy, balanced diet.

As part of a healthy, balanced diet, an adult's RIs for a day are:

Energy or Nutrient	Reference Intake
Energy	8400kJ/2000kcal
Fat	70g
Saturates	20g
Carbohydrate	260g
Sugars	90g*
Protein	50g
Salt	6g

What are nutrition and health claims?

Nutrition claims
These relate to what a product does or doesn't contain or contains in a higher or lower amount. For example:

- 'Sugar free' (must contain less than 0.5g sugars per 100g)
- 'Low fat' (must contain less than 3g fat per 100g)
- 'High in fibre' (must contain at least 6g fibre per 100g)
- 'Source of vitamin D' (must contain at least 15% of the RI for vitamin D per 100g)

You can have a look at the full list of Nutrition Claims permitted for use on foods sold within Great Britain on the UK government website **here**

Health claims
These are claims that state or suggest there is a relationship between a product and health. For example:

- “Calcium is needed for the maintenance of normal bones”.
- “Potassium contributes to the maintenance of normal blood pressure”.
- “Vitamin C contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue”.
- “Folate contributes to maternal tissue growth during pregnancy”.

Health claims on food labels are not allowed to state that the food can prevent, treat, or cure any disease or medical condition. They are also not allowed to refer to a rate or amount of weight loss.

List of ingredients

If a food or drink product has two or more ingredients, they must all be listed. These ingredients are listed in descending order of weight. This means the main ingredients in the packaged food will always be displayed first. This can help you to make healthier choices too, as if the first few ingredients in a food or drink product are ‘sugar’ or ‘butter’, you will know that they are the main ingredients, and is therefore a high-fat or high-sugar product.

Food additives

Different kinds of food additives are used in foods:

- **E numbers** - An ‘e number’ shows that a food additive has been safety tested according to the rules set out by the European Commission and has been approved for use in foods.
- **Antioxidants** - Such as vitamin E (E307) are often used in foods containing fat, to stop the fat going off (becoming rancid). Other commonly used antioxidants in foods include vitamin C, also known as ascorbic acid or E300.
- **Preservatives** – These are used to stop food going off and to keep it safer for longer (extend its shelf life). For example, sulphur dioxide (E220) is added to dried fruit to stop mould growing on it and meats like bacon and ham are often cured with nitrates (E252) to prevent bacteria growing.
- **Flavour enhancers -** These are used to enhance or 'boost' flavour in a food but do not provide flavour themselves. Monosodium glutamate (MSG – E621) is a very common flavour enhancer. Whilst flavour enhancers have E numbers, flavourings do not and instead 'flavouring' will be listed on the ingredients.
- **Sweeteners** – These are often used to add a sweet taste in low calorie products like drinks or yoghurts. Common sweeteners include aspartame (E951), saccharin (E954) and acesulfame-K (E950).
- **Emulsifiers** – These allow fat and water to mix, when naturally they would separate, e.g., in mayonnaise. A common emulsifier is Lecithin (E322), which is

found naturally in many foods. Stabilisers such as locust bean gum (E410) made from carob beans, help to keep these mixtures from separating again.

- **Gelling agents** - Such as pectin (E440), which is a type of soluble fibre present in fruit such as apples, provide texture to a product, and thickeners add body to products such as sauces and soups.
- **Colours** - These are added to provide colour and make food appear attractive. Some food colourings come from natural sources such as curcumin from turmeric (E100), while others like sunset yellow (E110) are artificial.

These colours include:

- Sunset yellow (E110)
- Quinoline yellow (E104)
- Carmoisine (E122)
- Allura red (E129)
- Tartrazine (E102)
- Ponceau 4R (E124)

These colours are used in several foods, including soft drinks, sweets, cakes, and ice cream, but now several retailers and manufacturers have removed these colours from their product ranges. If any of the six colours listed above are in food or drink, the food label must also have a specific warning saying that the colour 'may have an adverse effect on activity and attention in children'.