A guide to Food Labelling

You need to know how to label your food and drink if you are a:

Manufacturer — people who make and sell packaged food, or
Importer — people who bring packaged food into New Zealand for sale, or
Packer — people who pack or re-pack food for retail sale.

This guide helps you create your food label to meet the rules in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code).

Why should you read this?

This guide will help you get your food label right. You must label your food so it meets the rules of the Code. Your product could be recalled or you could be fined if you get this wrong.

Introduction

What do you need to do?

- Create your label.
- Make sure it meets the rules in the Code.

Labels vary from product to product. Sometimes businesses copy labels from other products which is where they go wrong. It is your responsibility to make sure your label has all of the right information to meet the rules in the Code. We have provided a checklist on pages 4-5 to help you know you've got it right.

How to use this guide

There are 2 parts to this guide:

1. **The example label** - this helps you know what needs to go on your label.

2. **The checklist** - this helps you make sure you've got the main parts covered so you meet the rules in the Code.

We have divided the example and checklist into 4 main areas:

- **Yellow** — ensures your label is easy for consumers to understand.
- **Blue** — explains how to identify your product.
- **Red** — helps consumers be safe when eating your food.
- **Green** — helps consumers make informed decisions about your product.

Where to get extra help?

The Code is complex and has many exceptions. This guide only covers the basics, so you may need further help to label your food.

For more information on the Code see:

www.mpi.govt.nz - this includes the health star rating guidance and calculator.
www.foodstandards.govt.nz - this has information on the Code.

Getting Your Claims Right Guidance
- http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/publications/Pages/gettingyourclaimsright.aspx

Nutrition, health and related claims
- http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/industry/labelling/Pages/Nutrition-health-and-related-claims.aspx

Nutrition Panel Calculator
- http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/industry/npc/Pages/Nutrition-Panel-Calculator-introduction.aspx

Nutrient Profiling Scoring Calculator for Standard 1.2.7
- http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/industry/labelling/Pages/nutrientprofilingcalculator/Default.aspx

If you still need help, MPI recommends you contact a food labelling consultant to help write your label.
- http://www.foodsafety.govt.nz/registers-lists/fsp-consultants.htm

Your food label must:

- be easy to read
- be written in English

Advertising for a food must not say anything that is banned from being on your food's label. This includes pictures, words, and any other information in print or online (including websites).

Ensuring safety of your product

Your food label must clearly have:

- A **date mark** for foods with a shelf life of less than 2 years. It needs to be a:

Use By
If the food must be consumed before a certain date because it could make people sick.

or

Best Before
If the food declines in quality but is still safe to be consumed.

or

Bkd On / Bkd For
Only for bread products.

- **Storage instructions** for consumers to keep or make the food safe to eat.

- **Statements you have to make:** some ingredients/foods need to be avoided by certain people (e.g. allergic people, pregnant women) or the consumer needs certain information so they don't get sick. This needs to be included on the label.

Not all foods/ingredients need these, you should read the user guide "Warning and Advisory statements and Declarations" to see if your product needs a statement http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/code/userguide/pages/warningandadvisoryde1403.aspx

There are 3 main statements:

1) Allergy declaration: some ingredients can cause severe allergic reactions in some people. See the checklist on page 4 for ingredients you have to highlight.

2) Warning statement: only applies to some foods. You must use the exact words outlined in the Code and they must be 3mm or bigger. See the checklist for foods that need a warning statement.

3) Advisory statement: only applies to some foods/ingredients. You can choose how to write your advisory statement but you must make it clear why your consumer needs this information. See the checklist on page 4 for foods that need advisory statements.

Identifying your food

Your food label must clearly have:

- A **lot identification** which enables you to trace your product if it needs to be recalled.

- An accurate **name or description** of the food. Some foods for example processed meat, honey and infant formula must use the exact names in the Code.

- The **name and physical address of your New Zealand or Australian business.** A PO Box, website or email address by itself is not enough.

Informing your consumer

Your food label must clearly have:

Health Star Rating

You can choose to put this on the front of your pack to help consumers make informed decisions. If you choose to you must **correctly calculate the number of stars** for your food and **use the health star symbol correctly.**

Nutrition content claims and health claims

💡 **This is really complex, you may need to ask an expert for help. See the weblinks on the introduction page.**

If you choose to make **nutrition content claims** or **health claims** about your product you must:

- be able to prove the claim you have made,

- add the nutrition information for your claim to your NIP. This rule over rides any exeption to having a NIP.

Percentage labelling

If part of your food is highlighted on your label in **words, pictures, or graphics,** you must show what percentage of the highlighted food your product contains.

Irradiated and genetically modified food

If any part of your food has been **irradiated or genetically modified** you must state this.

Amount of food

Put this on your product to help consumers make more informed decisions. Make sure you use an appropriate unit of measure (e.g. kg, g, ml). Alcoholic beverages need the **number of standard drinks** and **alcohol by volume (ABV)**. Any other food which has more than 1.15 ABV, must be included on the label.

Nutrition information panel (NIP)

- Which shows the amount per serving and amount per 100g (or 100mL for liquids).

- There are different types of NIPs, so yours may look different from the example depending on your product. As a minimum, you must have all of the information shown in the example.

Your NIP must meet the rules about layout and content as stated in the Code.

Some products don't need a NIP, including:

- most alcoholic beverages,

- herbs and spices, tea, coffee,

- fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish,

- prepacked filled rolls and sandwiches,

- food in a package with less than 100cm² total surface area.

Ingredients list

- List your **ingredients** in descending order.

- List any **food additives** you've used. There are rules about how you list these.

Some products don't need an ingredients list including:

- packaged water,

- standardised alcoholic beverages,

- food in a package with less than 100cm² total surface area.

RICE CEREAL

98% fat free

NUTRITION INFORMATION

Servings per package: 10
Serving size: 35g

	Average Quantity Per Serving	Average Quantity per 100g
Energy	566 kJ	1623 kJ
Protein	2.6g	7.4g
Fat, total	0.5g	1.4g
- saturated	0.2g	0.5g
Carbohydrate	29.7g	88.8g
- sugars	2.3g	6.6g
Sodium	179 mg	510 mg

Ingredients :
Rice (94%), sugar, molasses, salt, emulsifier (471) (contains **soy**)

Store in a cool, dry place.

Made in New Zealand

Cereal Loops
123 Wheat Rd
Auckland

www.cerealloops.co.nz

350g

Checklist

Complete one checklist per product If the item is not applicable for your product, write N/A in the comments box	Must have this	Depends on the product	Is it on your label?	Comments
Name or description of the food	☑		☐	
If your food is a processed meat, honey or infant formula, have you used the exact name from the Code?		☑	☐	
Name and physical address of your New Zealand or Australian business	☑		☐	
Lot identification	☑		☐	
Date Mark for food with a shelf life of less than 2 years	☑		☐	
Which one? Best Before ☐ Use by ☐ Bkd on / Bkd For ☐				
Storage instructions to keep or make food safe to eat		☑	☐	
Allergy declaration applies to foods containing:		☑	☐	

Allergy declaration applies to foods containing:

added sulphites	☐	milk	☐
soybeans	☐	peanuts	☐
shellfish	☐	sesame seeds	☐
crustacea	☐	tree nuts and their products	☐
egg	☐	cereals containing gluten	☐
fish	☐		

	Must have this	Depends on the product	Is it on your label?	Comments
Advisory statement applies to foods containing:		☑	☐	

Advisory statement applies to foods containing:

bee pollen and propolis	☐	unpasteurised milk products	☐
milk or milk substitutes made from cereal/nuts/seeds	☐	food additives with a known laxative effect	☐
unpasteurised egg products	☐	aspartame or aspartame - acesulphame salt	☐
quinine	☐	phytosterols or phytostanols or their esters	☐
guarana or caffeine	☐		

	Must have this	Depends on the product	Is it on your label?	Comments
Warning Statement only applies to royal jelly, kava, infant formula products, foods for infants and formulated sports foods		☑	☐	
Used the **exact wording from the Code**	☑		☐	
Text 3mm or bigger (or >1.5mm for small packages)	☑		☐	

💡 **The guidance document "Warning and Advisory Statements and Declarations" has helpful information about warning statements**

Complete one checklist per product — If the item is not applicable for your product, write N/A in the comments box	Must have this	Depends on the product	Is it on your label?	Comments
Ingredient list	☑		☐	
In descending order	☑		☐	
Food addictives declared		☑	☐	
Exemptions/exceptions		☑	☐	
Amount of food in appropiate unit of measure	☑		☐	
Number of standard drinks (for alchoholic beverages only)		☑	☐	
Alcohol by volume		☑	☐	
Nutrition information panel (NIP)	☑		☐	
Amount per serving	☑		☐	
Amount per 100g (or 100ml for liquids)	☑		☐	
Listed the energy and 6 main nutrient components	☑		☐	
Serving per package and serving size	☑		☐	
Used the right NIP for your product	☑		☐	
Layout from the Code followed	☑		☐	
Exemptions / exceptions		☑	☐	
All of the rules about **making nutrition content and/or health claims** in the Code are followed (only applies if you have chosen to make a nutrition content or health claim).	☑		☐	
💡 **The guidence document "Getting your claims right" has a helpful checklist for making each type of claim.**				
Percentage labelling		☑	☐	
Listed irradiated foods		☑	☐	
Listed genetically modified foods		☑	☐	
Health star rating (this step only applies if you have chosen to include a health star rating on your product)				
Correctly calculated number of stars	☑		☐	
Used the health star symbol correctly	☑		☐	
Your label is easy to read	☑		☐	
Your label is in english	☑		☐	