



Packaging and labelling

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Know

What do you need to know?

- Unsafe and/or unsuitable packaging can make your food unsafe. You need to know that the packaging you use is food grade so it keeps your food safe.
- Not all foods have to be labelled, but for those that are, the labels must meet the rules in the Australia New Zealand Food standards Code (the Code).
- Foods can become unsafe over time, even though they still might look, smell and taste OK. It's important to let your consumer know when to eat your food by, by calculating the shelf-life and providing a Best Before or Use By date. You need to make sure you calculate this date correctly.

Package

- Only use packaging that doesn't cause, or contribute to, food becoming unsafe or unsuitable.
- Check that packaging is food grade when you buy it. Either:
 - purchase packaging labelled as being suitable for food, or
 - get an assurance from your supplier that it is food grade.





Know

- Check that packaging is intended for your type of foods or use (e.g. honey drums have a liner suitable for use with acidic foods, that won't flake, peel or degrade).
- Handle and store packaging with the same care as a food or ingredient.

Why is packaging important?

- Packaging protects your food from becoming unsafe or unsuitable.
- Anything that touches your packaging (i.e. bugs, chemicals or foreign matter) can make your food unsafe or unsuitable.

Labelling

- You must meet the rules about labelling in the Code for any foods you label.
- If you are supplying bulk foods these will generally need to be accompanied with a packing or specification sheet. You must supply the same information that would go on the food label.
- Labels or specification sheets will generally need to include:
 - name of the food,
 - lot/batch identification,
 - name and address of your New Zealand or Australian business,
 - any applicable advisory statements, warning statements and declarations,
 - any conditions for storage and use,
 - ingredients list,



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- date marking (e.g. use-by, best before etc.),
- nutrition information panel,
- information about nutrition, health and related claims (only if you've made a claim),
- information about characterising ingredients and components,
- if the product is or has been made with genetically modified foods or irradiated foods.



Bread that has a shelf-life of less than 7 days must have either a Best Before, Baked-For or Baked-On date.

- If you receive or supply any bulk food, you must check that any label information that is needed is also supplied.



Not all foods need this, e.g. fresh fruit and vegetables

- If your food doesn't have to be labelled, you must still be able to tell your customers:
 - what's in the food,
 - any warning statements,
 - if the food is made from or contains genetically modified ingredients or irradiated foods.

Why is labelling important?

- Labels allow your customers to make good and safe food choices.
- Some of your customers may have medical conditions (e.g. allergies) which require them to include or avoid certain foods in their diet.



Know

- Consistency in the layout of label (e.g. having a nutrition information panel and using minimum font sizes) can help your customers make good food choices.
- MPI has developed a guide to help you create your food label. Follow '**A guide to food labelling**' <https://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/2965> to write your label.

Why calculate the shelf-life of a food

- You may need to work out the shelf-life of a food so that you can apply either a use-by or best before date.
- There is a guide to help you work out shelf-life. Follow '**How to determine the shelf-life of food**' <https://mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/12540>
- Food that has a shelf-life of more than 2 years, or is an individual portion of ice cream or ice confection (e.g. a popsicle) does not need to be date marked.



Do

What do you need to do?

Package

- If you are packaging food:
 - implement procedures for ensuring packaging will not cause, or contribute to, food becoming unsafe or unsuitable,
 - calculate the food's shelf-life,



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Do

- identify whether you need to either:
 - label your food, or
 - provide a packing or specification sheet with bulk foods.

Label

- You must meet the rules about labelling in the Code for any foods you label.

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Show

What do you need to show?

- Show your verifier:
 - your packaging and how you know it is safe and suitable for the foods you are packaging,
 - your food labels and how you know what to put on your labels.
- Your verifier might:
 - how you worked out the shelf-life of a food.

