Food labelling requirements

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Food labelling

What is food labelling?

• Food labelling contains information provided by food businesses about their products
• It covers all food that is sold to the consumer directly as well as food sold to cafés, restaurants and other catering establishments
• It is controlled by law so it is accurate, not misleading and safe

Why is it important?

• It educates the consumer about the food they buy
• It helps consumers to make informed choices
• It helps consumers to store and use the food safely
Presenting information – minimum font size

- Most frequent consumer complaint: small print on labels
- A minimum font size has been set for all mandatory information on most food labels
- Minimum font size is:
  - 1.2mm (“x-height”)
  - 0.9mm largest surface less than 80cm²

In the example below, the x-height is number 6

```
Appendix
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1.2
3.4
5.6
GCE Topic 1
Food labelling requirements

Mandatory information (what must be on the label)

1. The name of the food
2. List of ingredients
3. The quantity of certain ingredients
4. Net quantity
5. Instructions for use (if needed)
6. Indication of minimum durability (‘Use by’ or ‘best before’ dates)
7. Storage conditions and/or conditions of use
8. Name or business name and address of the food business operator
9. Place of origin or provenance (if implied)
10. Food allergens (14 in total plus their derivatives)
11. Nutrition information
12. Alcohol strength (for beverages with more than 1.2% alcohol)
1. The name of the food

It is illegal for food to have false or misleading names or descriptions.

There are three types of names:

1. Legal name
2. Customary name
3. Descriptive name
Mandatory information (what must be on the label)

2. The list of ingredients

- The list of ingredients on a food label must have a heading that includes the word ‘ingredients.’
- In most cases, ingredients have to be listed in descending order of weight when the product was prepared.

**Ingredients:**

- **Wheat** Flour, Water, Vegetable Oil (Rapeseed Oil), Beef (13%), Beef Kidney (10%), Onion, Cornflour, Salt, Dextrose, Yeast Extract, Malted **Barley** Extract, **Milk** Proteins, Black Pepper, Onion Powder, Glucose Syrup.

**INGREDIENTS**

- **Cod** (65%), Batter (Water, **Wheat** Flour, Starch (**Wheat**, Potato), Salt, Corn Flour, Vegetable Oil (Palm Oil), Raising Agents (Diphosphates, Sodium Carbonates), Skimmed **Milk** Powder, Dextrose), Breadcrumbs (**Wheat** Flour, Yeast, Water, Salt, Spices, Vegetable Oil (Rapeseed Oil), Colour (Capsanthin), Vegetable Oil (Sunflower Oil).
3. Quantitative Ingredient Declaration (QUID)

When ingredients are emphasised on the label to categorise the food, the quantities of these ingredients should be shown to make sure that consumers are not misled. This is the Quantitative Ingredient Declaration (QUID).

It should be used where:
- the ingredient is in the name of the food or is usually associated with that name
- the ingredient is emphasised on the labelling in words, pictures or graphics
- the ingredient is essential to characterise a food and to distinguish it from another product that it could be confused with.

The minimum percentage of the ingredient in the food must be given either next to the name of the food or in the ingredients list.
4. **Net quantity**

- This is the weight or volume of the product without the packaging.
- It must be provided in metric units (kilos and grams or litres, centilitres and millilitres).
Mandatory information (what must be on the label)

5. Instructions for use

These are the manufacturer’s instructions for preparing the food.

Instructions for use on a dry product

**Preparation Method**

1. Empty contents of the sachet into saucepan
2. Gradually add 850ml (1.5 pts) of cold water stirring constantly
3. Bring to the boil, reduce heat, partially cover & simmer for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally
4. Serve & Enjoy!

Instructions for use on a fridge product

- Remove outer packaging and film lid.
- Place on a baking tray in the centre of a pre-heated oven for 15–20 minutes.

**Oven**

- 15–20 mins
- 190°C/375°F
- Gas Mark 5

Instructions for use on a freezer product

**Cooking Instructions**

Adjust times according to the particular oven.

**Oven from Frozen:**

Remove outer packaging leaving the pie in the foil. Place on a baking tray in the centre of a pre-heated oven at 180°C/160°C Fan 350°F/Gas Mark 4 for 40 minutes
Mandatory information (what must be on the label)

6. Indication of minimum durability

This information is about the storage and use of food which aims to help consumers to use food safely and reduce waste.

There are two main types of date marks required

1. Best before
   - This date mark appears on most pre-packaged foods
   - Consumers can use the food after this date but it may not be best quality
   
   Best Before End 12 2014

2. Use by
   - This date mark appears on perishable foods
   - Consumers risk food poisoning if they use the food after this date

Use by:
21 Jul
Keep Refrigerated
Mandatory information (what must be on the label)

7. Storage conditions and/or conditions for use

Following these instructions makes sure the food will last as long as the date shown if it hasn’t been opened, or that it remains safe after opening.

Storage conditions for a dry product

Store in a cool, dry place

Storage conditions for a fridge product

Storage
- Keep refrigerated

Storage conditions for a freezer product

Storage Conditions
Store frozen below -18°C
Do not refreeze once thawed
Mandatory information (what must be on the label)

8. The name or business name and address of the food business operator

- The label should contain the name or business name and address of the food business operator in the European Union.
- If a consumer is not satisfied with how a food is labelled, they should contact the food business operator.

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9. Country of origin or place of provenance

- Country of origin or place of provenance becomes mandatory on a label if the name implies that the food comes from or has been made in a different country to where it was produced.

**For example:**
Salmon smoked in Ireland but made from Norwegian salmon should not be described as ‘Irish smoked salmon’ but as ‘Norwegian salmon smoked in Ireland,’ or ‘Imported salmon smoked in Ireland.’

If the Norwegian salmon had been labelled as ‘Irish Smoked Salmon’ in the example below this would be incorrect, because it implies that the salmon came from Ireland when it is in fact Norwegian.

**Correct**
![Correct Label Example](Norwegian_Salmon_Smoked_in_Ireland.png)

**Incorrect**
![Incorrect Label Example](Irish_Smoked_Salmon.png)

- From 1st April 2015 country of origin labelling will be mandatory for fresh, chilled and frozen meat from pig, sheep, goat and poultry.
10. Food allergens

- Food allergy, food intolerance and coeliac disease can cause some people to become ill.
- It is important that food labels help people with a food allergy, food intolerance or coeliac disease to make safe food choices.
- There are 14 food allergens (including derivatives) that by law must be emphasised in the ingredients list on the label if they are deliberately added.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Peanuts</th>
<th>Nuts</th>
<th>Cereals containing gluten* (wheat, barley, rye, oats, spelt and kamut)</th>
<th>Eggs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Milk</td>
<td>Fish</td>
<td>Lupin</td>
<td>Mustard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molluscs (such as mussels and oysters)</td>
<td>Crustaceans (such as lobster and crab)</td>
<td>Soybeans</td>
<td>Celery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Food that is labelled ‘gluten free’ contains less than 20mg/kg gluten.
Food that is labelled ‘very low gluten’ contains less than 100mg/kg gluten.
### 10. Food allergens

- Manufacturers can emphasise the 14 food allergens in the ingredients list through a typeset that clearly distinguishes the food allergen from the rest of the list of ingredients including bolding or underlining the type.
- In addition manufacturers can include an allergy advice box on the label which signposts the consumer to the ingredients list where allergens are emphasised.

#### Example of bold type

**Ingredients:**
- Wheat Flour, Water, Vegetable Oil (Rapeseed Oil), Beef (13%), Beef Kidney (10%), Onion, Cornflour, Salt, Dextrose, Yeast Extract, Malted Barley Extract, Milk Proteins, Black Pepper, Onion Powder, Glucose Syrup.

**ALLERGY ADVICE**
For Allergens see ingredients in bold

#### Example of underlined type

**Ingredients:**
- Wheat Flour, Water, Vegetable Oil (Rapeseed Oil), Beef (13%), Beef Kidney (10%), Onion, Cornflour, Salt, Dextrose, Yeast Extract, Malted Barley Extract, Milk Proteins, Black Pepper, Onion Powder, Glucose Syrup.

**ALLERGY ADVICE**
For Allergens see ingredients underlined
11. Nutrition labelling

- If a nutrition or health claim is made about a food e.g. High Fibre or low in fat, nutrition information has to be provided. Nutrition labelling will become a mandatory requirement from 13 December 2016.
- If a business is voluntarily providing a nutrition panel on their label it must comply with the requirements of the Food Information Regulation from 13 December 2014.
- Doesn’t apply to natural mineral waters.

### Nutrition table

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Per 100g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>1500 kJ/356 kcal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>7.4g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which Saturates</td>
<td>1.1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrates</td>
<td>58.1g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>of which Sugars</td>
<td>16.8g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>9.9g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>Below 0.1g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Linear

**PER 100G**

Energy: 1500kJ/356kcal, Fat: 7.4g of which saturates: 1.1g, Carbohydrates: 58.1g of which sugars: 16.8g, Protein: 9.9g, Salt: below 0.1g
12. Alcohol strength

Alcohol strength must be provided if a drink contains more than 1.2% alcohol.

For more information visit the Public Health Agency website on alcohol [www.knowyourlimits.info](http://www.knowyourlimits.info)
Voluntary labelling

Certain pieces of information are often included on food labels but are not required by law. These are added by the manufacturer or retailer voluntarily. Examples of additional information that may be included in a label are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
<th>Nutrition</th>
<th>Marketing</th>
<th>Production</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vegetarian or vegan labelling</td>
<td>Nutrition information*</td>
<td>Marketing terms, for example fresh, pure, natural</td>
<td>Production methods, such as organic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country of origin (where not required)</td>
<td>Nutrition signposting, for example colour coding or reference intake</td>
<td>Pictures and graphics</td>
<td>Method of slaughter, for example Halal and scechita slaughter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving suggestions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Nutrition information becomes mandatory when a food or non-alcoholic drink makes a nutrition or a health claim. From 13 December 2016 nutrition information will be mandatory on the majority of foods whether or not a claim is made.
Nanotechnology

- Nanotechnology is the addition of nanoparticles (tiny particles) to food products which enables manufacturers in the food sector to improve flavour and even to make processed foods healthier by reducing the amount of fat and salt needed in production.

- Nanoparticles are invisible to the human eye. One nanometer is about 60,000 times smaller than the diameter of a human hair.

- Nanotechnology can be used in food production to improve the taste, colour, flavour, texture and consistency of a variety of foods.

- Nanotechnology can also be used to improve the nutritional value of a food by making certain nutrients more bioavailable.