

Allergens and Food Labeling

Food allergies and food hypersensitivities affect millions of Americans and their families. Regulations help protect these individuals by requiring packaged foods and beverages to have a label containing ingredients.

Allergens

The nine major food allergens must be declared on the packaged food labeling. They must use the common or usual name of the allergen. Also, the specific type of tree nut, fish, and shellfish must be declared on the label.

9 Major Food Allergens



Peanuts



Crustaceans Shellfish



Eggs



Tree Nuts



Wheat



Fish



Milk



Soy



Sesame

The common or usual name of a food (e.g. whey, casein, miso) may not be recognized as an allergenic source by the consumer; therefore ingredient labels containing these ingredients must either:

- list the food source in parentheses following the name [i.e. whey (milk), miso (soy)] or;
- include a “Contains” declaration statement (e.g. Contains: Wheat, Milk, Soy) printed immediately after or adjacent to the list of ingredients in a reasonable type size but not less than 1/16”
- a “contains” statement is not required if ALL allergens are listed in the ingredient statement a recognizable form (e.g. milk, wheat, soy)

Examples of allergens that may not be easily recognizable:

- Soy lecithin (soy)
- Worcestershire Sauce (soy and/or anchovies)
- Sodium caseinate, whey, lactalbumin (milk)
- Omega 3 fatty acids (fish oil source or nut source)
- Spelt, semolina (wheat)
- Flour (e.g. wheat, almond, macadamia)

A “May contain” statement listing allergens processed in the same facility is not required, but if present, it does not exempt a firm from Good Manufacturing Practices to preclude cross-contamination.

Food Labeling Examples (depicts the front and back of a label)

| | | | | |
|--|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Common or usual name of the product</p> | <h1 style="margin: 0;">Flour Tortillas</h1> <p style="margin: 10px 0;">Net Wt. 30 oz (850 g)</p> | <p>* You do not need to bold the allergens on the ingredients list. In the example below, the allergen is bold to show that there is an allergen on the ingredients list.</p> | | |
| <p>Net quantity of contents-in U.S. Customary System (eg., ounce, pound, etc.) and metric measure (e.g., milligram, liter, etc.)</p> | | | | |
| <p>List of ingredients by common or usual name in descending order by net weight</p> | | | <p>Ingredients: ENRICHED BLEACH FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMINE MONONITRATE, RIBOFLAVIN, FOLIC ACID), WATER, VEGETABLE SHORTENING (INTERESTERIFIED AND HYDROGENATED SOYBEAN OILS), CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF: SALT BAKING SODA, SODIUM ACID PYROPHOSPHATE, DISTILLED MONOGLYCERIDES, ENZYMES, FUMERIC ACID, AND CALCIUM PROPIONATE AND SORBIC ACID (TO MAINTAIN FRESHNESS).</p> | <p>Ingredients: ENRICHED BLEACH FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMINE MONONITRATE, RIBOFLAVIN, FOLIC ACID), WATER, VEGETABLE SHORTENING (INTERESTERIFIED AND HYDROGENATED SOYBEAN OILS), CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF: SALT BAKING SODA, SODIUM ACID PYROPHOSPHATE, DISTILLED MONOGLYCERIDES, ENZYMES, FUMERIC ACID, CALCIUM PROPIONATE AND SORBIC ACID (TO MAINTAIN FRESHNESS). Contains: WHEAT</p> |
| <p>Name and address of manufacturer</p> | | | <p style="text-align: center;">Store 1234567 Company 1234 Store Dr. Store, TX 99999</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">Store 1234567 Company 1234 Store Dr. Store, TX 99999</p> |

Several food ingredients exist that can cause hypersensitivity reactions in certain individuals and are required to be declared in the food ingredients labeling. These include:

Sulfites

- Used as preservatives. Must be declared if food contains ≥ 10 parts per million total sulfites.
- Other names:
 - Potassium bisulphite
 - Potassium metabisulphite
 - Sodium bisulphite
 - Sodium dithionite
 - Sodium metabisulphite
 - Sodium sulphite
 - Sulphur dioxide
 - Sulphurous acid

Color Additives

- FD&C Yellow No. 5
- FD&C Red No. 40
- Color additives made from cochineal extract and carmine

Gluten

- Describes a group of proteins found in certain grains. For example:
 - Wheat
 - Barley
 - Rye

Nitrates/Nitrites

- Cured or processed meats — bacon, sausage, hot dogs, and ham, as well as deli meats such as chicken, turkey, roast beef, and salami — often contain added nitrates and nitrites.
- These compounds prevent the growth of harmful bacteria, add a salty flavor, and make the meat appear red or pink.

Additional Information Regarding Labeling Requirements:

- [fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/guidance-industry-food-labeling-guide](https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/search-fda-guidance-documents/guidance-industry-food-labeling-guide)
- [dshs.texas.gov/food-manufacturers-wholesalers-warehouses/labeling-food-manufacturers-wholesalers-warehouses](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/food-manufacturers-wholesalers-warehouses/labeling-food-manufacturers-wholesalers-warehouses)

For Additional Questions:

- DSHS Hemp Program**
DSHSHempProgram@dshs.texas.gov
- Milk and Dairy Unit**
Milk.regulatory@dshs.texas.gov, 512-834-6758
- Manufactured Foods Operations**
foods.regulatory@dshs.texas.gov, 512-834-6670
- Retail Food Safety Unit**
foodestablishments@dshs.texas.gov, 512-834-675
- Drugs and Medical Devices Unit**
DMD.regulatory@dshs.texas.gov, 512-834-6755



QUICK FACTS

Allergic reactions or hypersensitivities to these ingredients are not limited to food products, these ingredients are also present in other types of consumable products. These products include: Consumable Hemp Products (CHP), Cosmetics, and Over-the-Counter (OTC) Nonprescription Drugs. Proper labeling is important to ensure all ingredients, including allergens are disclosed to the consumer.

For More Information Visit the Following Links:

- [dshs.texas.gov/consumable-hemp-program](https://www.dshs.texas.gov/consumable-hemp-program)
- [fda.gov/drugs/information-consumers-and-patients-drugs/otc-drug-facts-label](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/information-consumers-and-patients-drugs/otc-drug-facts-label)
- [fda.gov/drugs/understanding-over-counter-medicines/educational-resources-understanding-over-counter-medicine](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/understanding-over-counter-medicines/educational-resources-understanding-over-counter-medicine)