



Knowing what's in your food

K

Know

What do you need to know?

- The Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code (the Code) contains rules you may need to meet:
- The Code is found here:
<http://www.foodstandards.govt.nz/code>
- The Code includes rules about:
 - which foods or ingredients are allergens,
 - which additives, preservatives and processing aids can be (or must be) used with particular foods,
 - ingredients that can't be used in food – or need to be approved before they are used,
 - composition rules that only apply to some foods, (e.g. jam, icing, fruit & vegetables in brine, oil, vinegar etc.)
- You can check the Code or ask your consultant, verifier or registration authority for more information.
- If you think a food isn't labelled correctly, especially if it probably has an allergen that isn't listed (e.g. a frozen pie doesn't list wheat flour or gluten) – check with your supplier before selling it.





Know

Why is knowing what's in your food is important?

- Rules about using some ingredients and inputs in food take into account the effects on human health across a whole diet lifetime. Sometimes use of ingredients or inputs is limited to certain foods to ensure people's health is not put at risk by getting too much, or too little, of a substance or nutrient. The rules also take into account views of the general public about what they expect to be in their foods (or not).
- New ingredients, or inputs, that are found or developed need to be assessed as safe before they can be used in foods.
- Knowing and being able to tell customers what's in your food will allow them to make informed choices. This is especially important for people with food allergies. Food allergies can result in life-threatening reactions that can occur within minutes of eating the food.
- If you are making foods on behalf of other businesses (e.g. a contract manufacturer) your responsible for ensuring any ingredients used in your business are safe and suitable (it's not okay just to receive mystery ingredients and mix them together).



Retailers of chilled or frozen food: Even if you are only selling food made and packaged by others you have a responsibility to check that the food is labelled correctly. This guide will help know what you should check for:

<http://www.mpi.govt.nz/document-vault/2965>





Know



Allergen Info: There are 11 common food allergens you must know about. These are sulphites, cereals containing gluten (e.g. wheat), shellfish, eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, soybeans, sesame seeds, tree nuts and lupin.



Do

What do you need to do?

- Keep details of the ingredients you use (e.g. write down and follow your recipes) so you know what ingredients and allergens they contain.
- Check recipes or specifications meet the rules in the Code.
- Check the labels of your ingredients or the foods you use.
- Any processing aids, additives (e.g. colours), preservatives, vitamins or minerals must be food grade and permitted for use.
- You must be able to tell customers whether a food contains each individual allergen if they ask. For packaged foods this information must be on the packaging. All staff must be able to tell your customers if your food contains allergens.



Show

What do you need to show?

- Your verifier will:
 - ask how you know what is in the ingredients you use,
 - ask how you know the recipes or specifications you use meet the requirements of the Code.
- Your verifier may:
 - ask staff to tell them which foods contain allergens.

