

How to read food labels

Know what to avoid

The Food Allergen Labeling & Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) of 2004 and the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education, and Research (FASTER) Act of 2021 say that the source of ingredients for some food allergens must be on the food label. These laws cover the 9 most common food allergens. They are:

- Milk
- Soy
- Peanuts
- Wheat
- Eggs
- Tree nuts
- Fish
- Shellfish
- Sesame

Read all labels. This includes foods, medicines, vitamins, lotion, mouthwash, toothpaste, and pet food.

Read the label every time you buy the product. Ingredients can change without warning.

Where can I find allergens on the label?

The allergens can be found on the food label in two ways.

1. **In the ingredient list.** This list must state the common name, such as wheat. The common name may be in parentheses after the ingredient name.
2. **In the “contains” statement.** This always lists the common name, such as wheat.

INGREDIENTS: SEMOLINA (WHEAT).

DURUM FLOUR, NIACIN, IRON (FERROUS SULFATE), THIAMINE MONONITRATE, RIBOFLAVIN, FOLIC ACID.

CONTAINS WHEAT INGREDIENTS. THIS PRODUCT IS MANUFACTURED ON EQUIPMENT THAT PROCESSES PRODUCTS CONTAINING EGGS.

What is a manufacturers warning?

This warning lets you know that there **may be** cross-contact with an allergen. Phrases like “may contain”, “processed in”, or “manufactured on” may be used. These warnings may show up anywhere on the label. (See example – last sentence on the sample label)

Avoid foods that have a manufacturers warning on the label.

This type of labeling is voluntary. **It is not regulated by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).** You won't know the risk of cross-contact based on the statement. A label that says, “processed in a facility” **does not mean** that food is safer than food with a label that says “may contain”.

You can call the manufacturer for more information about the risk of cross-contact.

ALERT: Call your child's doctor, nurse, or clinic if you have any questions or concerns or if your child has special health care needs that were not covered by this information.

This sheet was created to help you care for your child or family member. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment and follow-up.