

Food Allergies: How to Read Food Labels

Know what to avoid

The Food Allergen Labeling & Consumer Protection Act (FALCPA) of 2004 says that the source of ingredients for some food allergens must be on the food label. The law covers the 8 most common food allergens. They are:

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

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

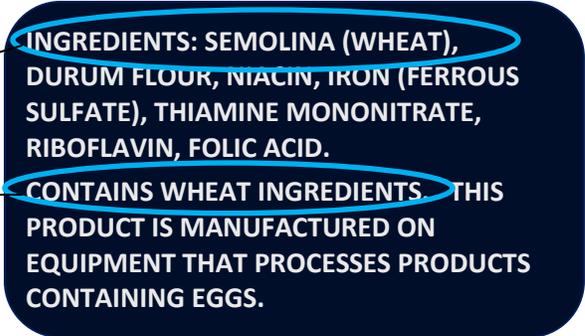
Read the label every time you buy the product. Ingredients can change without warning.

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.

Sample label



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 manufacturer's 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 manufacturer's 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.

This teaching sheet is meant to help you care for your child. It does not take the place of medical care. Talk with your healthcare provider for diagnosis, treatment, and follow-up.