

## FOOD LABELING

Tell me what you eat and I'll tell you who you are, we are what we eat, a healthy mind in a healthy body and other phrases that we hear everywhere. However, eating healthily is not so simple.

We are very far from the healthy food of our ancestors, who ate directly what the earth gave them and what was generated by their livestock but today, with so many processed foods, so many chemical components and especially with so much publicity that intends to sell us healthy food, which not always is, it's very difficult to find the suitable food.

That is why it's extremely important to know the components of our food and consequently we must learn how to read the labelling. Since this is the food presentation card, if we know how to read it, we will know the best choice for the healthiest food to avoid the one that may harm our health.

The function of labelling is to offer the correct and truthful food information on the food characteristics: nature, identity, qualities, composition, quantity, duration, country of origin, manufacturing or obtaining mode.

In order to ensure a high level of consumer protection against food information, the EU set out to unify the information for the consumer provided on product labels.

Thus, after approving a [Regulation on consumer information](#) in July 2011, the next step took place from December 13th 2014, date from which the general information must be adapted to the new parameters.

According to the aforementioned Regulation, the list of mandatory mentions in the approved labelling by the European Commission is as follows:

**FOOD NAME:** It must be accompanied by mentions about the physical conditions of the product or the specific treatment to which it has been subjected (powder, frozen, freeze-dried, deep-frozen, concentrated or smoked).

**LIST OF INGREDIENTS:** It will include all food ingredients in decreasing order depending on the quantity that the product includes. However, this list excludes unprocessed fruits, vegetables and potatoes, water, vinegar fermented of a single product, cheese, butter, milk - as long as nothing more than dairy products, food enzymes, ferments or salt- and foods that consist of a single ingredient.

**HIGHLIGHTED INGREDIENTS:** It will be necessary to indicate the specific percentage of an ingredient when this ingredient appears in the food name and when it's highlighted in the labelling by means of words, images or graphic representation (for example, whole-wheat bread).

**HIGHLIGHTED MENTION OF ANY INGREDIENT THAT CAUSES ALLERGY OR INTOLERANCE:** If it's not clearly indicated in the product name, it should appear prominently in the list of ingredients, so that it differs from other substances.

**NET QUANTITY:** It must indicate the net weight of the product.

**NET QUANTITY OF FOOD:** If solid food is sold with a liquid cover (for example mozzarella cheese), both the total weight and the drained net weight should be indicated.

**MINIMUM DURATION DATE OR EXPIRATION DATE:** It will indicate "to be consumed preferably prior: (day and month)" when the duration of the product is less than three months, "to be consumed preferably before the end of (month and year)" when the duration of the product is between 3 and 18 months, or "to be consumed preferably prior the end of (year)" if the duration extends beyond 18 months.

**NAME, COMPANY NAME AND FOOD BUSINESS OPERATOR'S ADDRESS:** With this measure, some products will definitely lose the anonymity they are accustomed to.

**COUNTRY OR PLACE OF ORIGIN:** The current list of relevant products, such as honey, olive oil, fruits and vegetables, fish and beef, will be extended to all meats: pork, sheep, goat and poultry. In addition, the indication of the country or place of origin will be mandatory when its omission may misinform the consumer.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE:** In the event that the product requires it.

**NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION:** It is mandatory to indicate the energetic value and the amount of protein, fat, saturated fat, carbohydrates, sugar and salt per 100 grams of product or 100 millilitres. This information can be completed with data on the content of monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, polyalcohol, starch, food fibre and any vitamin or mineral.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS OF CONSERVATION AND USE:** To allow the preservation or use in the best conditions of food once opened, it will be necessary that they appear on the label, as well as the deadline for consumption, as in the case of milk bricks.

**ALCOHOL GRADE:** For drinks with an alcohol content greater than 1.2% vol.

#### IS IT ENOUGH TO READ THE PRODUCT NAME OR PRESENTATION?

As we can see from all of the above, labelling is vital so that they don't sell you the Brooklyn bridge and evidence of this is bread, which in many supermarkets and even in bakeries is sold as whole grains bread, when what it contains is a small percentage of whole wheat flour and bran, and in some cases it is completely lacking of whole wheat flour; The same goes for pre-cooked supermarket pizzas, which some do not have cheese, being this one of their main ingredients, and that we can only be confirmed by reading the complete information in labelling.

This is why it's imperative to read the labelling before putting a product in our cart, since our health and that of our loved ones depends on it.

Let's never forget this wonderful phrase:

**TAKE CARE OF YOUR BODY. IT IS THE ONLY PLACE  
YOU HAVE TO LIVE. JIM ROHN**