

## Looking at labels

Labels on foods are important because they help us make intelligent choices about what we eat. People who are intolerant (allergic) to yeast, milk sugar (lactose), gluten (in wheat) or who want low fat foods depend on the label information.

Some people have opinions about the sorts of information they expect to find on food labels.

At the end of this activity you will:

- survey some food labels;
- know the sorts of information that can be found on food labels;
- know the extent of people's concern about food labelling.

**You will need:**

- access to the internet.

**What to do:**

1. Think about all of the types of foods that some people cannot tolerate (that is, foods that they are allergic to). The list would include food such as peanuts, sesame seeds, yeast, eggs, and gluten. Add to the list if you wish. Choose 2 of these ingredients to investigate in step 3.
2. Make a list of any 12 supermarket foods.
3. Survey the labels of the 12 foods you have chosen. Look for the 2 ingredients you have chosen in step 1.
4. Compare your data with that of 4 or 5 other class members. Make a list of the products that you would not be able to eat if you could not tolerate the ingredient you have chosen.
5. Work in a small group to plan a survey of the information people look for on food labels. Devise a questionnaire of about 6 to 10 questions. To do this you will need to:

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- Agree on what sort of information you want to know. For example, you might want to find out if people look for information about fat content.
  - Think of one question for each bit of information you want to find out. For example, 'Do you look for fat content on food labels?'
  - Make sure your questions have a yes/no answer or a one-word answer.
  - Include a question that finds out if people would expect a genetically modified food ingredient to be labelled as such.
6. Each person in the group should survey 10 people.
  7. Collate (put together) the data from the approximately 50 people the group has surveyed. Try to group the responses into a few categories so that you can look for a pattern in the sorts of information people need.

**What to do with your information:**

1. Display your group data from step 4 on a digital or hard copy poster. The set of class posters will provide data on a large number of foods.
2. Work in your group to analyse the data collected through your group survey.
3. Display the conclusions of your group to the class.

**Useful resource**

Australia New Zealand Food Authority  
<http://www.anzfa.gov.au/>

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