

Consumer Rights & Responsibilities

YEAR 10 FOOD TECHNOLOGY | MISS BET

Students learn about:

- Consumer rights and responsibilities in relation to food including;
 - Safety & Hygiene
 - Value for Money
 - Accurate information with regard to food labelling and marketing

Students learn to:

 Outline the rights and responsibilities of consumers with regard to food.

Safety & Hygiene

The Right to Safety

In NSW, the Food Act (2003) and the Food Regulation Act (2010) are the primary laws protecting the right of consumers to clean and safe food. According to these Acts;

- Food has to be fit for human consumption; for example, a food should not contain toxic substances or levels of bacteria that can cause food poisoning.
- Certain standards for foods are set, for example, sausages must contain a certain percentage of meat and only certain ingredients can be used as fillers.
- Consumers cannot be deceived, for example juice sold as claiming to be 100% juice must not be diluted.
- Fair trading is promoted, for example, a food cannot be advertised with false and misleading information.

Fake News

Environmental Health Officers

Environmental Health Officers enforce the Acts.

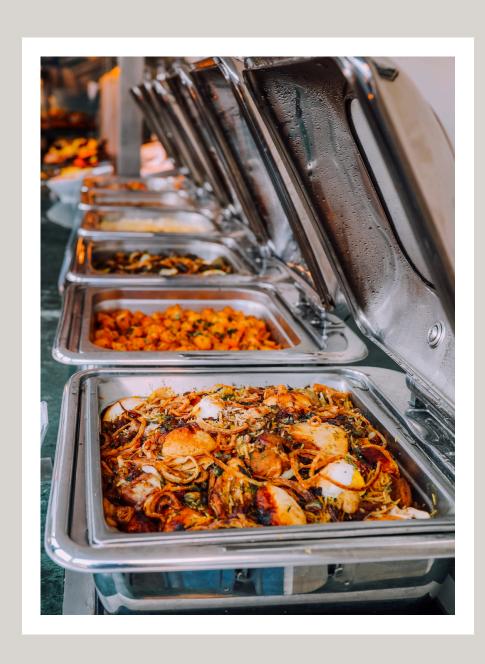
They are permitted to inspect food premises at any time and take samples, issue warnings, reinspect, fine or close a food premise if hygiene standards are not met.

Under this legislation, food for sale must be prepared in a commercial kitchen where materials and equipment must meet standards. Most food ventures need council approval and inspection before they can operate.



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Why are environmental health officers important for our communities?



HACCP

Regulations also encourage food businesses to establish food safety plans such as;

Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points (HACCP). The plans make operators more aware and responsible in undertaking practices that prevent food poisoning.





Under the NSW Smoke Free Environment Act (2000) most enclosed public places such as; restaurants and cafes are required to be smoke free. The law protects the rights of non-smokers, as passive smoking is a health risk.

Regulations require staff in hospitality to be trained in hygiene and safety, for example, correct food handling and responsible service of alcohol. Public liability insurance is also compulsory in case customers are injured or fall sick as a result of an establishment's operations.



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How do regulations like these contribute to maintaining customer trust and satisfaction?

Value for Money

The Right to Redress and Be Heard

While consumers know that it costs more to purchase a meal than to make a meal at home, they still have the right to receive value for money. Consumers expect fresh, high quality, nutritious ingredients and adequate, consistent portion sizes. They also expect friendly and efficient service. At restaurants, consumers may tip staff if the service or food is exceptional.

By law, food service providers must provide menus that are priced and adequately described. Consumers also have the right to complain and be compensated if the food or service is poor or does not meet the promised expectations.

Consumers have the right to receive a fair settlement, including a refund or compensation for misrepresented, poor-quality food or unsatisfactory services.

Food Labelling & Marketing

The Right to be Informed

Food service and catering ventures must inform the consumer of the main ingredients, cooking method and portion sizes of the dishes available. Some providers use photographs and displays to inform customers, while others inform them verbally.

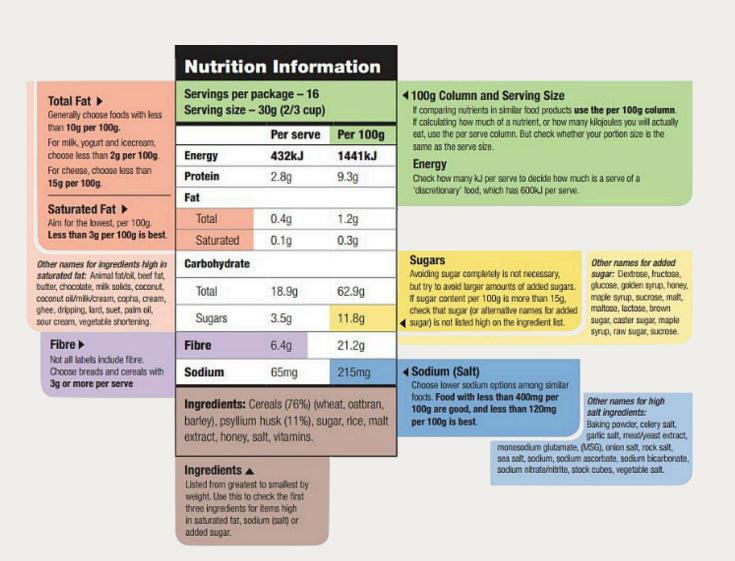
For example; Chicken Montrose Grilled chicken served with a fresh tomato and basil sauce.

A consumer has the right to ask if a dish has certain ingredients such as peanuts, to which they may be allergic. It is illegal for food producers to tell consumers that a dish does not contain traces of nuts if it has come in contact with them.

The food service and catering industry is very competitive. Common marketing practices employed to entice customers include media advertising, sponsorships, competitions, food deals, memberships and giveaways. Consumers are protected against false and misleading advertising under fair trading laws and there are strict guidelines as to how competitions should be conducted. The consumer is responsible for reading the 'fine print' commonly used on promotional materials.

The labeling on food packages <u>must</u> provide information that allows the consumer to make informed choices. The **Food Standards Australia and New Zealand Act (1991)** stipulates that a food label MUST include the following information;

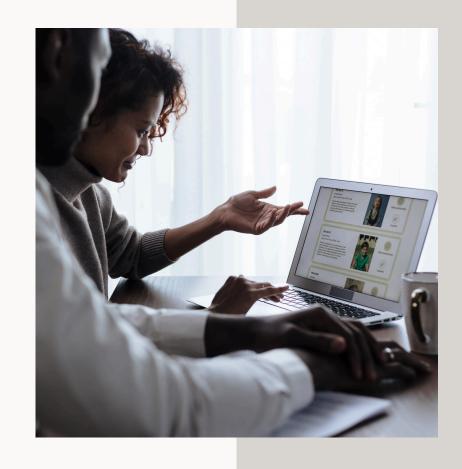
- Nutritional labeling
- Percentage labeling
- Name and description of the food
- Food recall information
- Allergen statement
- Date marking
- Ingredients list
- Food additives
- Legibility requirements
- Storage requirements
- Country of origin
- Labels must also tell the truth



Consumer Responsibilities

Consumers are not entitled to redress or refund if they:

- Simply change their mind, decide they don't like the purchase.
- Discover they can buy the goods or services more cheaply elsewhere.
- Have damaged the goods by using them in a way that was unreasonable.



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Why do you think consumers aren't entitiled to refunds if they change their mind about a purchase?