

Going to the supermarket takes on a whole new meaning when you are avoiding common foods.

You will need to learn how to read **food labels** and prepare more meals from scratch. And you will need to read labels every time you buy as manufacturers change their ingredients or processing aids from time to time.

New Zealand's food labelling laws require that common allergenic foods be stated on food labels. This includes **milk, egg, soy, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, fish, shellfish** and **gluten** containing cereal, including **wheat**.

While manufacturers don't have to include warnings such as '**may contain traces of peanuts**', these are usually used if manufacturers feel there is a risk of cross contamination; for example, if biscuits containing peanuts are produced on the same line as another biscuit.

New inroads are being made into food technology and this means it is becoming more common for food allergens to appear in unexpected places, such as some water products.

This highlights the importance of reading labels for foods and beverages everytime.



Eating out can be stressful for people with food allergies. But, with care and forward planning, you can enjoy a café or restaurant meal with friends and family.

Call ahead

Speak to the manager and explain your allergy. Don't downplay it, tell them if it is life-threatening. Check the menu and discuss options.

Take food with you

Safely enjoy eating with others without risk. Check first with the restaurant that they are happy for you to bring your own meal!

Special order

Ask for a specially prepared, simple meal, rather than more elaborate menu items that may have been prepared in advance.

Cross contamination

Check that your meal is prepared with clean utensils, saucepans, chopping boards etc, and that oils used for frying have not been used for other foods.

Hidden allergens

Look out for allergens in things like sauces, marinades, salads and desserts. Remind the staff that all ingredients need to be checked and if ingredient labels are not available, avoid that food item.

Check it

When the food arrives don't be afraid to double check that the dish is safe!

