



California Department of Public Health Food and Drug Branch



ALLERGENS

More than 160 foods have been identified to cause food allergies in sensitive individuals. However, eight foods account for over 90 percent of all documented food allergies in the U.S. The federal [Food Allergen Labeling and Consumer Protection Act](#) (FALCPA) has identified the following eight foods or food groups as major food allergens, and likely to result in severe or life-threatening reaction if consumed by sensitive persons:

- Milk
- Eggs
- Fish (e.g., bass, flounder, cod)
- Crustacean shellfish (e.g., crab, lobster, shrimp)
- Tree nuts (e.g., almonds, walnuts, pecans)
- Peanuts
- Wheat
- Soybeans

The [FALCPA](#) requires food manufacturers to label products containing an ingredient or protein from a major food allergen in one of the following two ways:

- When the name of the food source of the major allergen does not appear elsewhere in the ingredient statement; food manufacturers can include the name of the food containing the allergen in parenthesis, followed by the common or usual name of the major food allergen in the list of ingredients.
- Manufacturers can place the word "Contains" followed by the name of the food source from which the major food allergen is derived, immediately after or adjacent to the list of ingredients. The type size must not be smaller than the type size used for the list of ingredients. For example: *Contains Wheat, Milk, Egg, and Soy.*

Under [FALCPA](#), raw agricultural commodities (usually fresh fruits and vegetables) are exempt. In addition, highly refined oils derived from one of the eight major food allergens and any ingredient derived from such highly refined oil are also exempt from the allergen labeling requirements.