

2025 UPDATED AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND CONSENSUS STATEMENT ON BEST PRACTICE FOOD ALLERGEN MANAGEMENT

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The first stakeholder consensus statement for best practice food allergen management in packaged foods and food service for Australia and New Zealand was released in 2020. The statement outlined the food allergen management responsibilities of consumers, packaged food manufacturers and food service businesses and was endorsed by 6 stakeholder organisations. Figures 1 and 2 show the background activities, process of development and key points of 2020 consensus statement.

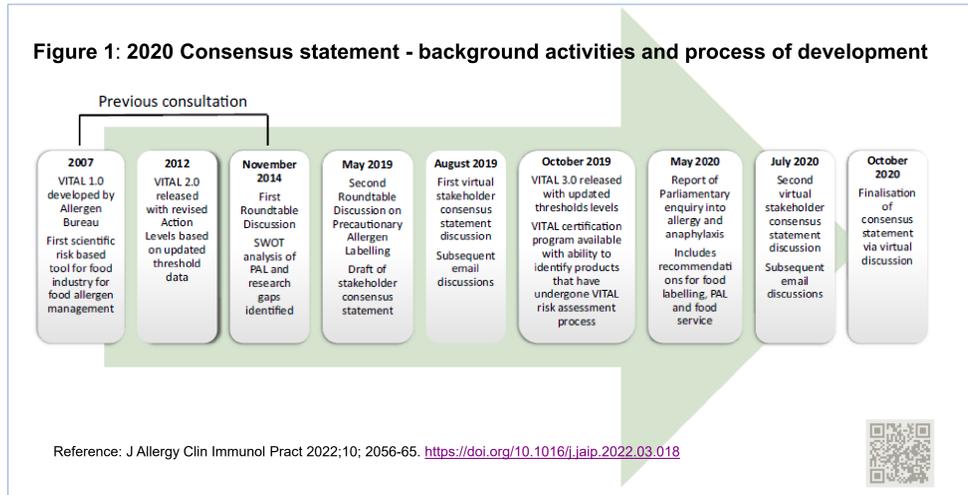


Figure 2: Key Points of the 2020 Consensus Statement

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF CONSUMERS TO:

1. declare their allergies and read food labels (including ingredient lists and allergen declaration statements), and
2. ultimately make their own judgement about the foods they choose to consume.

WE CONSIDER THAT IN ORDER TO ENABLE CONSUMERS TO MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS ABOUT THEIR SAFETY:

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PACKAGED FOOD MANUFACTURERS TO:

1. follow robust allergen management practices including quantitative risk assessment, and
2. use clear, consistent labelling to inform consumers about that food's allergen content, including the possible presence of unintended allergens.

IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF FOOD SERVICE ESTABLISHMENTS/PROVIDERS TO:

1. follow robust allergen management practices, and
2. ensure that staff understand and can inform consumers about the allergen content of the food they provide, including the possible presence of unintended allergens.

Development of the 2025 Consensus Statement

In 2023, the Allergen Bureau and FSANZ jointly convened a stakeholder consultation forum in Wellington, New Zealand to explore the change in reference doses from ED01 to ED05 for precautionary allergen labelling. That meeting initiated the review of the 2020 consensus statement. Between April 2023 and April 2025, a series of online meetings, electronic discussions and targeted consultations were conducted, led by the National Allergy Council and Allergen Bureau.

Figure 3 outlines the background activities and stakeholder engagements for the development of the 2025 consensus statement which was finalised in May 2025 and endorsed by 17 stakeholder organisations. Importantly, two key sectors were added outlining the responsibilities of health professionals and food safety regulator and enforcement agencies. This brings together all sectors in the community and industry involved in making food safer for people with food allergies.

Figure 3: 2025 Consensus statement - background activities and process of development



2025 Best Practice Consensus Statements

Consumers have a responsibility to:

1. Always have their emergency allergy medication with them.
2. Read food labels, including ingredient lists, allergen summary ("contains") statements and Precautionary Allergen Labelling (PAL) statements before buying and eating packaged foods.
3. Always clearly communicate their allergies when ordering food.
4. Ask about the allergen content of food and drinks when eating away from home.

Packaged food manufacturers have a responsibility to:

1. Apply industry best practice food allergen management.
2. Meet regulatory obligations for clear, consistent, and accurate allergen labelling to let consumers know about the allergens that are present in the food.
3. Apply best practice when deciding if a PAL statement is required:
 - Use a risk assessment process, such as the Allergen Bureau VITAL[®] program, to identify the quantity of unintentional allergens that may be present in the final product.
 - Remove unintentional allergen presence from the food supply chain or reduce it to the lowest possible level.
 - Use a PAL statement only if the risk assessment shows the product may be a risk to the consumer with food allergies.

Food safety regulators and enforcement agencies have a responsibility to:

1. Provide industry with accurate and relevant resources to help them improve food allergen management and uphold high standards in consumer food safety.
2. Clearly communicate allergen management obligations to food businesses when selling, serving, manufacturing and importing food.
3. Communicate to food businesses and consumers how they respond to, and investigate, reports of allergic reactions to foods, whether they are packaged, unpackaged, sold via assisted service or served ready to eat.
4. Communicate how they enforce compliance with food allergen management, including labelling requirements.
5. Apply an evidence-based approach to assessing the accuracy of a PAL statement.

Food service businesses and retailers have a responsibility to:

1. Make sure all food service staff have the necessary training, skills and knowledge to manage food allergen risks.
2. Follow best practice food allergen management when ordering, storing, preparing, and serving food and drinks.
3. Make sure that all staff understand their responsibility to:
 - Provide accurate information when telling consumers about the ingredients in the food and drinks they serve.
 - Only supply customers with the food and drinks they ask for.
 - Provide food and drink that does not contain the allergen, when they have agreed to provide allergen free food or drink to a consumer with a food allergy. That is, the allergen is not present in the food or drink, whether as an ingredient or unintentionally included.
4. Make sure staff have access to information about the allergen and ingredient content of food and drinks so they can give consumers accurate information about allergens when they ask.

Healthcare professionals who have patients with food allergy have a responsibility to:

1. Educate their patients, or refer them to appropriate healthcare professionals and evidence-based patient support organisations who can educate them in an appropriate way, about how to:
 - Identify food allergens in packaged and unpackaged foods.
 - Better understand PAL statements.
 - Manage food allergen risk when purchasing, storing, preparing, and serving food at home.
 - Understand the importance of always telling food service staff about their food allergy and asking about allergens in food and drinks when eating away from home.
 - Understand the level of risk and make informed decisions.
2. Healthcare professionals who provide education on allergen avoidance should make sure they understand how food allergen management in food service and food manufacturing is applied. This includes having a good understanding of mandatory food allergen labelling and the principles of risk assessments used to apply PAL statements. Ensure that consumers understand the PAL statements should be treated the same as allergen labelling.



QR code for full 2025 Food Allergen Management Consensus Statement.

Conclusion:

The consensus statement aims to foster collaborative work between community, industry, health and regulatory sectors to improve outcomes for consumers who have food allergy, and to advocate for improved practices, access to education and training, and improved regulation.

Further information:
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