

# What's Cookin'?

Do you recognize all of the ingredients listed on every food label that you read? Probably not. For Americans with food allergies, reading labels can be frustrating. For example, a person who is allergic to milk knows to avoid obvious ingredients such as milk or cheese, but also can't eat scientific-sounding ingredients like casein (kay-SEEN) and whey (way), which come from milk.

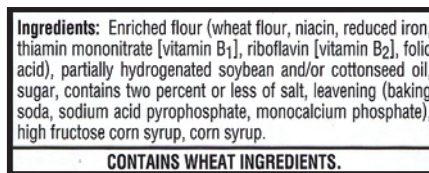
Thanks to a new law, which began on January 1, 2006, reading food labels is getting easier. Labels printed on or after that date must list in plain language if an item contains one or more of the top eight allergy-causing foods—eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, shellfish, soy, tree nuts and wheat. The food often appears at the end of the ingredient list after the word *contains* or in parentheses after an allergy-causing ingredient. For example, a food label for something that contains whey might read “whey (milk).”

**The three food labels below follow the new law. Read them. Then put a check mark in the box next to the one that is safe for a person allergic to wheat to eat.**

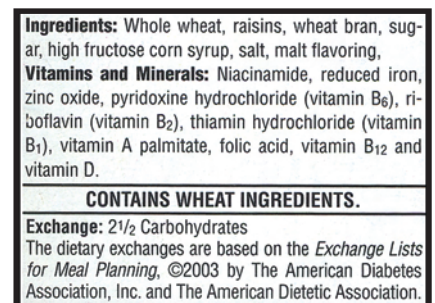
**A. Yogurt**



**B. Crackers**



**C. Bran Cereal**



## Take It From Me!

**People with food allergies offer these tips for reading labels and choosing foods:**

“If someone in school offers me food, I ask if there is a list of ingredients. If not, I do not eat it,” says **Paul, 12**.

“Never be afraid to ask questions [in a restaurant or at someone's house] about what's in a food,” says **Andy, 20**.

“Always read the label. [Even if it's a food you've eaten before.] If you can't read it, don't eat it,” says **Alex, 9**.

“Look at the last ingredient first, before reading the rest of the ingredients. That is usually where you can find a ‘May contain peanuts’ message. If it is not there, then I continue to read the rest of the ingredients,” explains **Paul, 12**.

**For specific tips on how to read labels for diets that must avoid eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, shellfish, soy, tree nuts, and wheat, visit [www.foodallergy.org/downloads.html](http://www.foodallergy.org/downloads.html).**