

Food supplements

What food supplements are and what you need to do as a business to sell them.

What a food supplement is

A food supplement is defined as 'any food the purpose of which is to supplement the normal diet and which is a concentrated source of a vitamin or mineral or other substance with a nutritional or physiological effect, alone or in combination and is sold in dose form'.

A wide range of nutrients and other ingredients might be present in food supplements. These can include:

- vitamins
- minerals
- amino acids
- essential fatty acids
- fibre
- various plants and herbal extracts

Food supplements are intended to supplement the normal diet. They are not medicinal products and as such cannot exert a pharmacological, immunological or metabolic action. Therefore, their use is not intended to treat or prevent diseases in humans or to modify physiological functions.

In the UK, food supplements are required to be regulated as food and are subject to the provisions of general food law. In Northern Ireland, food law relating to food supplements is covered by the [Windsor Framework](#).

Registration

To sell food supplements you must register as a Food Business Operator (FBO) with your local authority. Please visit our web page [setting up a food business](#), for more information on setting up as an FBO.

Selling your products

It is your responsibility to ensure that food supplements you sell are safe for consumption. There are certain things you should do to make sure they are safe.

Using a reputable supplier

Your supplier should be registered as a business with their local authority and provide fully referenced invoices and receipts.

Don't buy supplements over the internet unless you are confident the supplier is reputable.

Beware of counterfeit products, particularly if you are buying products on the internet and the product price is cheaper than other suppliers.

Keeping records

Keep records so you can identify the business you bought food supplements from and who you sold them to. You must also keep documents like invoices and delivery notes and produce these documents if they are requested by enforcement authorities.

Labelling

Make sure the food supplements you sell are labelled correctly. If they are not labelled correctly, do not accept them and contact your supplier to arrange for their return.

How food supplements should be labelled

Any food supplement that is placed on the market in Great Britain must comply with the general food labelling requirements set out within [Regulation \(EU\) No 1169/2011 on the provision of food information to consumers \(FIC\)](#).

In addition to the above regulations, there are specific labelling requirements that food supplements must also comply with set out in the [The Food Supplements \(England\) Regulations 2003](#).

The product label must be labelled as 'food supplement' and not 'dietary supplement'.

- the business name and address, which can be placed either on the product label or product packaging. This must be either:

(a) the name of the business whose name the food is marketed under; or

(b) the address of the business that has imported the food

Food supplements sold in NI must include a NI or EU address for the food business. If the food business is not in NI or EU, they must include the address of the importer, based in NI or the EU.

- a list of ingredients, including [common allergens](#) which must be emphasised
- conditions for use, including information on the recommended daily dosage and a warning not to exceed this
- storage instructions including a statement that the product should be stored out of the reach of young children
- a 'use by' or 'best before' date
- the amount of any vitamin or mineral or other substance with a nutritional or physiological effect which is present in the product
- a statement that food supplements should not be used as a substitute for a varied diet

This information must be either on:

- the packaging
- a label attached to the packaging
- a label which is clearly visible through the packaging

Importing supplements

If you import supplements into the UK, you are legally responsible for all aspects of those goods, including composition, safety and labelling of the products.

Legal requirements

Food supplements policy and legislative responsibility across the UK sits with the following organisations:

- England - the [Department of Health and Social Care](#)
- Scotland - [Food Standards Scotland](#)
- Wales - [Welsh Government](#)
- Northern Ireland - Food Standards Agency

Legal requirements - England

[The Food Information Regulations 2014](#) and [The Food Supplements \(England\) Regulations 2003](#)

Legal requirements - Scotland

[The Food Information \(Scotland\) Regulations 2014](#) and [The Food Supplements \(Scotland\) Regulations 2003](#)

Legal requirements - Wales

[The Food Information \(Wales\) Regulations 2014](#) and [The Food Supplements \(Wales\) Regulations 2003](#)

Legal requirements - Northern Ireland

[The Food Information Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2014](#) and [The Food Supplements Regulations \(Northern Ireland\) 2003](#)