

Label Detectives Activity

Welcome & Detective Training

- Kids are welcomed as “Junior Label Detectives.”
- They each get a **detective badge** (sticker or lanyard), magnified glass, mini notebook, and pen.
- Brief intro: “Detectives look for hidden clues. Today, the clues are allergens!”

Game: Hidden Allergens Challenge

Materials



- Mock food labels
- Use printouts (cereal, snacks, soup cans, frozen foods, etc.).
- Include a mix of foods: some safe, some with hidden allergens (e.g., “casein” for milk, “albumin” for egg, “whey” for milk, “semolina” for wheat).
- Mini “Detective Books” or worksheets for each child (to record clues, notes, and safe/unsafe findings)
- Magnifying glasses (fun prop)
- Pens

Setup

- Arrange mock food labels around the room, on tables, shelves, etc.
- Divide kids into small detective teams (about 4–5 per team).
- Each child should have:
  - ◊ Their real allergy notes, or
  - ◊ A chosen allergy (of a friend/family member or a “buddy”) if they don’t have one.
- Give each team their Detective Books and writing tools.

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How to Play

- The facilitator sets the scene:
  - ◊ “Welcome, Detectives! There are hidden allergens lurking in our food packages. Your mission is to uncover them before anyone has a reaction!”
  - ◊ Teams move from station to station (or the facilitator passes around the labels).
  - ◊ For each food label, teams carefully read the ingredient list, looking for anything that might be unsafe for their specific allergy.
  - ◊ If a term is tricky (e.g., “casein,” “albumin,” “whey,” “semolina”), they can talk to their fellow detectives.
  - ◊ In their Detective Books, kids record:
    - The food name
    - The allergens they found for themselves and their team
    - A note or clue (e.g., “casein = milk,” “albumin = egg”) and what items they would be able to eat or not eat
  - ◊ After investigating all labels, teams return to the facilitator to compare notes and reveal the allergens for their team together.

Wrap-Up: Detective Graduation



- Review key detective skills:
  - ◊ **Read labels carefully.**
  - ◊ **Ask questions.**
  - ◊ **Say no if unsure.**
- Each participant gets to keep their props.

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Label Detective

Which cookie can you eat if you have an egg allergy?



INGREDIENTS: UNBLEACHED ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMINE MONONITRATE [VITAMIN B1], RIBOFLAVIN [VITAMIN B2], FOLIC ACID), SEMISWEET CHOCOLATE CHIPS (SUGAR, CHOCOLATE, DEXTROSE, COCOA BUTTER, SOY LECITHIN, NATURAL FLAVOR, NONFAT MILK), SUGAR, SOYBEAN AND/OR CANOLA OIL, PALM OIL, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, LEAVENING (BAKING SODA, AMMONIUM PHOSPHATE), SALT, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, CARAMEL COLOR.
CONTAINS: MILK, WHEAT, SOY.
INGREDIENTS DERIVED FROM A BIOENGINEERED SOURCE



INGREDIENTS: ENRICHED FLOUR (WHEAT FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMINE MONONITRATE [VITAMIN B1], RIBOFLAVIN [VITAMIN B2], FOLIC ACID), SUGAR, SOYBEAN AND/OR CANOLA OIL, PALM OIL, HIGH FRUCTOSE CORN SYRUP, WHEY (FROM MILK), SALT, LEAVENING (BAKING SODA, CALCIUM PHOSPHATE), EGGS, WHEY PROTEIN CONCENTRATE, MONO- AND DIGLYCERIDES, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVOR, SOY LECITHIN.
CONTAINS: EGG, MILK, WHEAT, SOY.
CONTAINS A BIOENGINEERED FOOD INGREDIENT

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Label Detective

Can someone with a peanut allergy eat this?



MADE FROM: SEMI SWEET CHOCOLATE (SUGAR, CHOCOLATE, CHOCOLATE PROCESSED WITH ALKALI, COCOA BUTTER, MILKFAT, SOY LECITHIN, VANILLA EXTRACT), ENRICHED WHEAT FLOUR (FLOUR, NIACIN, REDUCED IRON, THIAMINE MONONITRATE, RIBOFLAVIN, FOLIC ACID), SUGAR, VEGETABLE OILS (PALM AND/OR SOYBEAN AND HYDROGENATED SOYBEAN), EGGS, CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF: CORNSTARCH, SALT, BAKING SODA, SOY LECITHIN, NATURAL FLAVOR, NONFAT MILK.
CONTAINS: EGGS, WHEAT, MILK, SOY.

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Label Detective

Which of these veggie straws can you eat if you have a milk allergy?



INGREDIENTS: POTATO STARCH, POTATO FLOUR, CANOLA OIL AND/OR SUNFLOWER OIL AND/OR SAFFLOWER OIL, CORN STARCH, CANE SUGAR, SALT, POTASSIUM CHLORIDE, SPINACH POWDER, SEA SALT, TOMATO PASTE, BEETROOT POWDER (COLOR), TURMERIC EXTRACT (COLOR).



INGREDIENTS: POTATO FLOUR, POTATO STARCH, CORN STARCH, TOMATO PASTE, SPINACH POWDER, SALT, SUGAR, BEETROOT POWDER [COLOR], TURMERIC), CANOLA OIL AND/OR SAFFLOWER OIL AND/OR SUNFLOWER OIL, BUTTERMILK, COCONUT OIL, GARLIC POWDER, NATURAL FLAVORS, YEAST EXTRACT, ONION POWDER, TOMATO POWDER, DEXTROSE, SOUR CREAM (CREAM, NONFAT MILK, CULTURE, CULTURED NONFAT MILK, CITRIC ACID, CREAM [NONFAT MILK, CREAM, LACTIC ACID, CULTURE]), SPICES (INCLUDING CELERY SEEDS), PAPRIKA, VINEGAR, MALIC ACID, SODIUM CASEINATE.

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Can someone with a milk allergy drink this?



Nutrition Facts Serving size: 1 bottle

Amount per serving: **Calories 270**, **Total Fat** 4.5g (6% DV), Saturated Fat 3g (15% DV), *Trans* Fat 0g, **Cholesterol** 20mg (7% DV), **Sodium** 140mg (6% DV), **Total Carbohydrate** 48g (17% DV), Dietary Fiber 0g (0% DV), Total Sugars 46g (Includes 32g Added Sugars, 64% DV), **Protein** 10g, Vitamin D 0mcg (0% DV), Calcium 316mg (25% DV), Iron 0mg (0% DV), Potassium 711mg (15% DV).

INGREDIENTS: BREWED STARBUCKS® COFFEE (WATER, COFFEE), REDUCED-FAT MILK, SUGAR, COCOA, PECTIN.

DISTRIBUTED BY NORTH AMERICAN COFFEE PARTNERSHIP, PURCHASE, NY 10577 USA.

SERVING SUGGESTION: SHAKE WELL. SERVE CHILLED OR OVER ICE. Comments or questions? Call 1-800-211-8307.

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Label Detective

Can someone with an egg allergy eat this candy?



INGREDIENTS: SUGAR, CORN SYRUP, CONTAINS LESS THAN 2% OF THE FOLLOWING: SALT, GLYCERINE, EGG WHITES, CONFECTIONER'S GLAZE, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS, MINERAL OIL, HONEY, CARNAUBA WAX, VEGETABLE OIL (COCONUT AND CANOLA OIL), ARTIFICIAL COLORS (INCLUDES FD&C YELLOW 6, YELLOW 5, RED 40, AND BLUE 1).

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Can someone with a sesame allergy eat this candy?



INGREDIENTS: CORN SYRUP, SUGAR, DEXTROSE, GELATIN, MODIFIED FOOD STARCH, WATER, CONTAINS 2% OR LESS OF (DL MALIC ACID), CITRIC ACID, SODIUM CITRATE, APPLE JUICE CONCENTRATE, NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS, GUM ARABIC, CARNAUBA WAX, COLOR ADDED, RED 40, YELLOW 5, RED 40 LAKE, YELLOW 5 LAKE, BLUE 2 LAKE, YELLOW 6, CARMINE COLOR, BLUE 1, BLUE 1 LAKE, WATERMELON JUICE CONCENTRATE.

THIS PRODUCT WAS MANUFACTURED IN A FACILITY WHERE MILK, EGGS, TREE NUTS, PEANUTS, WHEAT, AND SOY ARE USED IN THE PRODUCTION OF OTHER PRODUCTS.

What do you notice different about this label?

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