

## Sesame labeling in effect January 1, 2023

New federal requirements for food labeling under the Food Allergy Safety, Treatment, Education and Research (FASTER) Act, passed and signed into law in 2021 with broad support from the Allergy/Immunology community, take effect January 1, 2023. With it, the eight major allergens (milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans) subject to food labeling requirements become nine, with the inclusion of sesame. This is important news for the more than 1 million individuals in the US who have sesame allergy, and their caretakers.

The FASTER Act requires food manufacturers to add information on labels of foods that contain sesame or sesame derivatives, such as sesame oil, as of January 1. Some manufacturers may have started this information in labeling earlier, but any products *already in transit or on grocery shelves before that date* are not required to have this information on the label. Therefore, patients should be careful to watch out for products that were available for retail purchase prior to the effective date, and not assume products in the market do not contain allergens just because they are not labeled that way as of that day. Further, like labeling requirements for the other major allergens, foods ordered and wrapped individually, such as a made-to-order sandwich, are not required to be labeled.

A study establishing sesame as the ninth major allergen was [first presented at the 2019 Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology \(AAAAI\)](#) and published in [The Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology](#).

Here are some things you can do to inform your sesame-allergic patients and local community:

- Reach out to local news stations or newspapers to volunteer to be a resource on the issue if they want to cover this significant change at the beginning of the year.
- Search electronic medical records for sesame allergy patients and communicate with them about this important news:
  - Information will be required to indicate sesame as an ingredient on foods that contain it or a derivative
  - Products in stores and in transit as of January 1 are NOT required to be labeled this way, so careful reading of all labels remains crucial
  - Continued vigilance is especially important for foods provided without labels
  - It's still important to have a plan for responding to any potential reactions
- Review information on the [AAAAI website](#) about sesame allergy, and also these useful resources for more information for your practice and your patients:
  - [Allergy and Asthma Foundation of America/ Kids With Food Allergies](#)
  - [Allergy & Asthma Network](#)
  - [Food Allergy Research & Education](#)