

Pick and mix and allergies

From the sweeties.net wiki

Pick and mix is sold loose, from jars, tubs or bins, and that changes the picture for anyone with a food allergy. A sealed bag has a label listing its ingredients and allergens. A loose sweet has no label of its own, and it has been sitting in a shared display.

Where the risks come from

The main risk is cross contamination, which the charity Anaphylaxis UK describes as an allergen moving from one surface or food to another. With loose sweets, that can happen in several ways:

- **Shared scoops and tongs**, if they move between containers.
- **Sweets side by side**, in open bins or jars on the same stand.
- **Changing recipes**. Anaphylaxis UK advises checking labels every time, because ingredients can change from batch to batch.

What sellers must do

The Food Standards Agency's guidance for food businesses sets out the rules:

- **Allergen information for every item**. A business selling loose food must supply allergen information for every item that contains any of the 14 allergens. It can be in writing, such as an information pack, or given verbally, with a clearly visible notice explaining how to get it: see [the 14 allergens explained for sweets](#)
- **Each item separately**. Where food is laid out for people to help themselves, as at a buffet, allergen information is needed for each item separately.
- **Clean utensils and separate storage**. The guidance includes cleaning utensils before each use and keeping ingredients that contain allergens separate from others.
- **Honesty about the limits**. If cross contamination cannot be avoided, the business should tell customers that it cannot provide an allergen free product.

Sweets that a shop bags up before you choose them count as prepacked for direct sale. In England, since 1 October 2021, they need a label with the name of the food and a full ingredients list with allergens emphasised.

Buying online is covered too. Allergen information must be available before you buy, for example on the website, and again when the food is delivered.

May contain

Packed sweets sometimes carry precautionary labels, such as may contain nuts or made in a factory that handles peanuts. Anaphylaxis UK says these wordings all mean the same thing: there is a risk of cross contamination with that allergen. It advises talking to your GP or allergy specialist about them, because depending on your diagnosis, some doctors may advise that you can eat foods with precautionary labels for your allergen: see [what does may contain mean on sweets?](#)

Before you buy

- Check the allergen information for every sweet in your mix, not just one or two.
- Ask how scoops are used and cleaned, and whether sweets containing your allergen sit next to the others.
- If the seller says it cannot rule out cross contamination, take that seriously.
- If you have a serious allergy, follow the advice of your GP or allergy specialist.

On our shop, every sweet card opens up to show its ingredients and allergens before you buy.

Earn rewards on **sweeties.net**

Earn loyalty points on every order. Free to join.

+100 pts

Create your free account

Welcome bonus + earn on every order.



100 pts = 1 tree

Plant a tree in Scotland

Pledge points to our reforestation partner.



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