

Soya in sweets

From the sweeties.net wiki

Soya is one of the 14 allergens that must always be declared. In the sweets covered here, soya appears as lecithin, a fatty substance used as an emulsifier.

What lecithin is

Lecithin is a name for a group of fatty substances found in animal and plant tissues. It attracts both water and fat, which makes it useful for smoothing food textures, blending liquid mixtures and stopping things sticking. It is an excellent emulsifier, and in the UK and EU it has the additive number E322: see [what are E numbers in sweets?](#)

Lecithin can be made from several sources, including soybeans, sunflower oil, rapeseed, egg yolk and milk. A major source is soybean oil.

Why it is in chocolate

Chocolate makers began adding lecithin in the 20th century to improve the texture and consistency of chocolate. For example:

- **White chocolate** contains cocoa butter, sugar, milk solids and generally an emulsifier: soy lecithin, or another emulsifier called PGPR.
- **Kit Kat** ingredient lists from several countries include soya lecithin, both in the chocolate and in the wafer.

Allergen rules and exemptions

Because soya is an allergen, soya lecithin must be emphasised in the ingredients list of packed sweets, for example as soya lecithin in bold. A few soya ingredients are exempt from the allergen rule, including fully refined soya oil and fat, natural tocopherols from soya, and certain plant sterols made from soya oil.

The move to sunflower

The requirement to declare soya as an allergen, along with rules on genetically modified crops, has led to a gradual shift to other sources of lecithin, such as sunflower lecithin. Some Kit Kat recipes already list sunflower lecithin in their chocolate. So two similar bars can differ: one may contain soya and the other not, which is another reason to read each label: see [how to read a sweet label](#)

Soya and diets

Soya lecithin is plant based, so on its own it does not stop a sweet being vegan, but milk chocolate and white chocolate contain milk: see [milk in sweets](#) and [a guide to vegan sweets](#)

In our pick and mix, the chocolate sweets, such as milk chocolate raisins and white chocolate mice, are the ones to check first if you avoid soya. Each sweet card shows its ingredients and allergens before you buy.

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