

# ***Irradiated food?***

## ***Coming to a supermarket near you...***

***Irradiation is the process of exposing food or other materials to ionising radiation.***

*Food irradiation is used for shelf-life extension and for neutralising, not removing, contaminants or pests.*

Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) recently approved 12 regularly consumed fruits and vegetables and is now considering irradiation for **Blueberries** and **Raspberries**.

The expanding list of approved foods, significantly increases the proportion of potentially irradiated foods in the average Australian and New Zealander diet.

Irradiated fruits – marketed as “fresh” - are exposed to 150Gy - 1kGy of radiation, which is equivalent to approximately:

**1.5 million – 10 million chest x-rays per exposure.**

Irradiation decreases the vitamin and nutritional content of food and disrupts its molecular structure, producing free radicals and potentially harmful chemicals such as benzene, formaldehyde and cyclobutanones.

***Nukes & our food:*** *Australia has 3 commercially operating nuclear irradiation facilities. All use radioactive Cobalt-60 produced in Canadian reactors to zap our food and other products.*

### **How will I know if it's irradiated?**

Shoppers cannot tell if fruit has been irradiated simply by looking at it and inadequate labelling laws make it difficult to know if products have been irradiated.



So far, these foods have been approved:

**Apples  
Breadfruits  
Carambolas  
Custard Apples  
Herbal Teas  
Honeydew  
Lychees  
Mangosteens  
Pawpaws  
Persimmons  
Rambutans  
Spices  
(general)  
Strawberries  
Zucchini**

**Apricots  
Capsicums  
Cherries  
Grapes  
Herbs  
Longans  
Mangoes  
Nectarines  
Peaches  
Plums  
Rockmelon  
Scallopini  
Squash  
Tomatoes**

***Labelling is the only way to distinguish irradiated food from non-irradiated food.***

## **Will it be labelled?**

Current laws allow shops to use a sign close by to irradiated produce, rather than actual stickers or labels.

There is no mandatory wording for the irradiation statement, leaving the messaging up to marketing companies. Neither the word ***radiation*** nor ***irradiation*** is required.

The fruit, irradiated in Queensland may be sold in Queensland, interstate and overseas. Shoppers in southern states and New Zealand must keep an eye out for irradiated produce.

Knowing that people do not want to consume irradiated food, the industry has long pushed for weak labelling laws, such as the ones we have today.

Now alarmingly, the regulator, Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is considering getting rid of labelling all together.

### **Watch out!**

**Become a Food Irradiation Watcher!** Food Irradiation Watch advises shoppers wishing to avoid irradiated produce to look down at produce to see if there is a sticker and then look up to see if there is a sign. **If you do find irradiated products, let us know!**

**THEN... Join us in demanding that irradiated food remains labelled – and that labelling is improved!**

FYI: Pet food, therapeutic goods and animal feed are also allowed to be irradiated without labelling as they are not “food” under Australian law.

## **Is it safe?**

The science on the safety of irradiated food is controversial. Claims that irradiated food is safe are misleading as no long-term study of human consumption of an irradiated diet has been carried out.

In 2008, up to 100 Australian pet cats suffered neurological disease linked to eating irradiated cat food.

The Australian government has since banned the irradiation of cat food, but continues to expand the list of foods permitted to be irradiated for human consumption.

This is unacceptable!

- ✓ **Good food doesn't need irradiating.**
- ✓ **Irradiated food does require labelling.**

Refuse to eat irradiated food! Demand labelling! Let your supermarket, greengrocer and politician know that you choose to eat irradiation-free.

Together we can make sure that irradiated food stays off our tables!

## **Food Irradiation Watch**

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