

Cracking the Code

ON BEAUTY LABELING



shelf life

The Period After Opening (PAO) symbol is the open jar icon, which indicates how many months the product will be good after it's been opened. This is on products typically with a shelf life of 30 months or more.



us public health service seal

Products bearing the U.S. Public Health Service seal must contain 70% organic ingredients and follow strict guidelines for manufacturing and processing, according to today.com.



best before date

For products with a lifespan of less than 30 months, an hourglass icon and a "best before end of," or BBE, date is displayed.



cruelty-free

PETA runs the well-known Beauty Without Bunnies certification program, but they're not the only one. The Leaping Bunny is another internationally recognized certification program, and upholds a stricter program and mandatory audits.



net contents

The lowercase "e" is known as the estimated sign, or e-mark. It is required by the EU and basically indicates that the quantity of the product in a batch of packages is the same as what's stated on the label.



body care standards

Whole Foods developed strict baseline body care standards in quality sourcing, environmental impact and other categories in order for these products to earn the Premium Body Care logo. They've also identified more than 400 ingredients deemed unacceptable.



refer to insert

When there's required information such as ingredients and instructions to provide (and sometimes in multiple languages) but not enough room to do so on the packaging, this symbol lets the consumer know there's a leaflet, card or other insert to refer to inside the packaging.



full label disclosure

The Environmental Working Group, or EWG, established the EWG VERIFIED™ mark to indicate the product meets the strictest standards – and participates in full transparency—when it comes to harmful chemicals.



responsibility for packaging

The Green Dot trademark indicates the manufacturer financially contributes to a recycling organization to manage its packaging waste in an ecologically responsible manner. It is not a recycling symbol.



gmo avoidance

To earn the Non-GMO Project Verified seal, products must complete third-party verification, the highest-quality system, for their product labeling and certifications. It ensures products have been thoroughly evaluated by an independent party for compliance.



organic

The Organic Seal indicates the product has met strict production and labeling requirements of the USDA, and the final product is certified. Selling a product as "organic" when it is not can run a company fines of up to \$11,000 for each violation.



gluten-free

The Gluten-Free Certification Organization (GFCO) leads a strict gluten-free certification program, inspecting products and manufacturing facilities for the presence of gluten. Products bearing the gluten-free symbol must be certified by a third party to earn certification.