

YOUR FUTURE IN FOOD

# Food Packaging



**When you have an outstanding product, you want it to stand out. In the competitive world of retail food sales, packaging is your most powerful marketing tool.**

## **Effective packaging should:**

- protect against light, moisture and oxygen
- maintain product quality and protect from chemical or biological hazards
- get consumers' attention
- educate consumers about your product
- be user-friendly
- be environmentally-friendly where possible
- be cost-effective
- be lightweight and have no excess material
- follow government labelling guidelines

## **There are two main packaging categories:**

### **Primary packaging**

- is primarily seen by the end user
- protects the food inside it
- provides information to the consumer
- displays the product

### **Secondary packaging**

- is seen only by the retailer and wholesaler
- protects the product during shipping and handling
- is easily stored
- is economical to ship

## **Plan Your Packaging**

Start by looking at your competitors' packaging. Look at similar products in the grocery store – height, shelf space, product location, point-of-purchase displays – and develop your own ideas.

## Use Standard Sizes

Make sure you adhere to any standard size regulations that might apply to your product. For more information, go to [www.inspection.gc.ca](http://www.inspection.gc.ca).

Standard sizes can also reduce production and packaging costs and allow for more efficient warehousing and distribution.

## Do Market Research

Understand your target consumers. Know their needs, disposable income and priorities – and choose packaging that meets their needs and suits the image of your product.

## Know the Needs of Food Service Clients

Packaging products for sale to restaurants, cafeterias or other quick-serve clients has a few special considerations. This market prefers packaging that is:

- recyclable
- available in large quantities or sizes
- functional and easy-to-open
- labelled according to regulations
- packed for easy shipping and storage

## Consider the Pros and Cons of Different Packaging Types

Material	Pros	Cons
Metal (tin or aluminum)	can be heat processed or cooked can be hermetically sealed great protection lightweight convenient recyclable good gas, moisture barrier printable	may react chemically with food material can be expensive sealing equipment is expensive consider the cost of printing directly on can

Plastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>durable, yet flexible</li> <li>can be re-closed, easily sealed</li> <li>wide range of plastic types offer great flexibility</li> <li>good oxygen, water barrier</li> <li>can be transparent</li> <li>can be recyclable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>not always recyclable</li> <li>can degrade over time</li> <li>price varies – can be expensive</li> <li>not always printable</li> <li>not always heat sealable</li> </ul>
Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>printable</li> <li>usually affordable</li> <li>can be coated to provide a better barrier</li> <li>lightweight</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>susceptible to water or grease damage</li> <li>may not ship well – not very structurally protective</li> </ul>
Glass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can be transparent</li> <li>can be tinted to protect against light</li> <li>can be heat processed</li> <li>does not react with food</li> <li>can be formed into various sizes and shapes</li> <li>affordable</li> <li>does not degrade over time</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>heavy</li> <li>breakable</li> <li>not printable</li> <li>safety issues, due to breakage</li> </ul>

Packaging suppliers can help you choose the best packaging materials for your food product. Manitoba Agriculture Business Development Specialists can provide guidance and information on packaging suppliers.

**For more information:**

Go to [manitoba.ca/agriculture/food-and-ag-processing/](http://manitoba.ca/agriculture/food-and-ag-processing/)  
 Email [mbagrifood@gov.mb.ca](mailto:mbagrifood@gov.mb.ca)  
 Follow us on Twitter @MBGovAg  
 And [Manitoba Agriculture YouTube](#)

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