

Food Packaging Technology

B. Tech. (Agricultural Engineering) 4th Year

Packaging plays an important role in the food supply chain. Apart from protecting food from physical, chemical, and biological hazards, it also helps in maintaining quality and freshness of the packaged food and its safety, from production to consumption. Food packaging also supports marketing, communication, and sustainability goals. Therefore, it provides end to end solution for food supply chain and management system.

Importance of Food Packaging

Protection of Food	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Protects food from the ingress of microorganisms, dust, moisture, and contaminants• Prevents physical damage during handling, storage, and transportation• Acts as a barrier against oxygen, light, and humidity
Preservation of Quality and Shelf Life	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintains freshness, flavor, texture, and nutritional value• Reduces food spoilage and wastage• Helps in controlling oxidation and microbial growth
Safety and Hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevents contamination and food-borne illnesses• Ensures hygienic handling and storage• Tamper-evident packaging assures consumer safety
Convenience and Handling	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to store, transport, open, and use• Provides portion control and reusability• Suitable for modern lifestyles (ready-to-eat, microwaveable packs)

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Communication and Marketing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Displays product information (ingredients, nutrition facts, expiry date)• Enhances product appeal through design and labeling• Helps in brand identification and consumer trust
Environmental and Economic Importance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reduces food loss, saving resources and cost• Supports sustainable practices through recyclable and biodegradable materials

Requirements of an ideal Food Package:

Some of the important general requirements of an ideal food package are as under:

- An ideal food package must be compatible with the food.
- It should be non-toxic and made of food-grade materials.
- It should not react with food and should be free from harmful chemicals
- It should protect food against contamination from microorganisms.
- It should be a perfect barrier against moisture loss or gain and oxygen ingress.
- It should filter out harmful UV light.
- It should be strong enough to withstand mechanical stress encountered during processing and handling for the food.
- It should be transparent.
- It should be temper resistant or temper evident.
- It should maintain freshness and extends shelf life.
- It should be able to prevent loss of aroma and nutrients
- It should be easy to open, close, carry, and dispose.
- It should be of suitable size and shape meeting the marketing and consumer requirements.

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- It should have good appearance and printability.
- It should be able to educate the consumer about the use and benefits. Clear labeling with product name, ingredients and date of manufacturing and expiry dates helps the consumer in selection of the food products.
- It should be affordable for manufacturers and consumers
- It should use recyclable, reusable, or biodegradable materials and should create minimal packaging waste.

Food packaging plays a vital role in protecting food, maintaining quality, ensuring safety, and meeting consumer and environmental needs. Proper packaging not only preserves food but also supports sustainability and economic efficiency. Therefore, selecting the right packaging material and design is crucial for the food industry.

Exercise:

1. What is the main purpose of a tamper-evident feature, such as an inner membrane seal under a lid?

- A. To provide visible proof if the package has been opened previously.
- B. To improve the grip for twisting off a cap.
- C. To completely prevent any air from escaping.
- D. To make the package easier to open.

2. What is a significant environmental problem associated with food packaging?

- A. The manufacturing process releases harmful UV radiation.
- B. It is the primary cause of chemical contamination in food.
- C. It contributes significantly to the total solid waste stream.
- D. It prevents the natural biodegradation of leftover food.

3. Which of the following is most important requirement for effective food packaging?

- A. It must be transparent.
- B. It must be nontoxic.
- C. It must be easily disposed of.
- D. It must be low cost.

4. How does moisture protection in packaging work for a moist food product?

- A. It focuses only on blocking oxygen, as moisture is not a concern for moist foods.
- B. It uses permeable films to allow water to escape continuously.
- C. It allows the food to absorb moisture from the atmosphere to stay fresh.
- D. It prevents the food from losing moisture and drying out.

5. What is the primary purpose of a dispensing feature, such as a spout on a carton?

- A. To provide a way to easily get the product out of the container.
- B. To allow the package to be resealed after use.
- C. To show if the package has been tampered with.
- D. To reinforce the package and prevent physical damage.

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6. In addition to containing the food, packaging must inform and educate the consumer. What type of information is often required by law in many countries?

- A. Contents, ingredients, and nutritional content.
- B. The company's founding date and history.
- C. The names of the packaging designers.
- D. Serving suggestions and recipes.

7. Apart from protecting food from ingress of oxygen, which of the following is a threat that packaging must guard against?

- A. Carbon dioxide
- B. Water vapor
- C. Argon
- D. Nitrogen gas

8. What does the packaging requirement 'be compatible with the food' mean?

- A. The package should be the same color as the food inside.
- B. The package must not cause off-flavours or otherwise alter the food.
- C. The package's cost should be proportional to the cost of the food.
- D. The package must be made from the same raw materials as the food.

9. What is the primary function of physical protection provided by packaging?

- A. To prevent breakage and subsequent contamination of the product.
- B. To keep the product from losing moisture.
- C. To prevent the food from being exposed to UV light.
- D. To make the product look larger on the shelf.

10. The informational role of packaging is meant to do what, in addition to identifying the product for the consumer?

- A. To make the package difficult to open.
- B. To add weight to the package for stability.
- C. To hide the appearance of the food inside.
- D. To convince consumers to purchase and use the product.

Answer

1	2	3	4	5
A	D	B	D	A
6	7	8	9	10
A	B	B	A	D