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NF93-115 The New Food Label

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NebFact



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The New Food Label

prepared by Julie A. Albrecht, Extension Food Specialist

The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 (NLEA) required the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to propose new nutrition labeling regulations. The U.S. Department of Agriculture agreed to cooperate to develop similar regulations for meat and poultry products. The final regulations were published in January, 1993. The new food labels will be required on most foods by May 1994.

Mandatory and Optional *dietary components in the order in which they must appear on the Nutrition Facts panel. Mandatory components are shown in boldface.*

Total calories

Calories from fat

Calories from saturated fat

Total fat

Saturated fat

Polyunsaturated fat

Monounsaturated fat

Cholesterol

Sodium

Potassium

Total carbohydrate

Dietary fiber

Soluble fiber

Insoluble fiber

Sugars

Sugar alcohol

Other carbohydrate*

Protein

Vitamin A

Vitamin C

Calcium

Iron

Other essential vitamins and minerals

*The difference between total carbohydrate and the sum of dietary fiber, sugars, and sugar alcohol (if declared).

Descriptors

To minimize consumer confusion, descriptive terms have been defined.

Nutrient Content Descriptors that May Be Used on Food Labels

Descriptor ^a	Definition ^b
Free	A serving contains no or a physiologically inconsequential amount: <5 calories; <5 mg of sodium; <0.5 g of fat; <0.5 g of saturated fat; <2 mg of cholesterol; or <0.5 g of sugar
Low	A serving (and 50 g of food if the serving size is small) contains no more than 40 calories; 140 mg of sodium; 3 g of fat; 1 g of saturated fat and 15% of calories from saturated fat; or 20 mg of cholesterol; not defined for sugar; for "very low sodium," no more than 35 mg of sodium
Lean	A serving (and 100 g) of meat, poultry, seafood, and game meats contains <10 g of fat, <4 g of saturated fat, and <95 mg of cholesterol
Extra lean	A serving (and 100 g) of meat, poultry, seafood, and game meats contains <5 g of fat, <2 g of saturated fat, and <95 mg of cholesterol
High	A serving contains 20% or more of the Daily Value (DV) for a particular nutrient
Good source	A serving contains 10-19% of the DV for the nutrient
Reduced	A nutritionally altered product contains 25% less of a nutrient or 25% fewer calories than a reference food; cannot be used if the reference food already meets the requirement for a "low" claim
Less	A food contains 25% less of a nutrient or 25% fewer calories than a reference food
Light	(1) An altered product contains one-third fewer calories or 50% of the fat in a reference food; if 50% or more of the calories come from fat, the reduction must be 50% of the fat); or (2) The sodium content of a low-calorie, low-fat food has been reduced by 50% (the claim "light in sodium" may be used); or (3) The term describes such properties as texture and color, as long as the label explains the intent (e.g., "light brown sugar," "light and fluffy")
More	A serving contains at least 10% of the DV of a nutrient more than a reference food. Also applies to fortified, enriched, and added claims for altered foods
% Fat Free	A product must be low-fat or fat-free, and the percentage must accurately reflect the amount of fat in 100 g of food. Thus, 2.5 g of fat in 50 g of food results in a "95% fat-free" claim
Healthy^c	A food is low in fat and saturated fat, and a serving contains no more than 480 mg of sodium and no more than 60 mg of cholesterol
Fresh	(1) A food is raw, has never been frozen or heated, and contains no preservatives (irradiation at low levels is allowed); or

(2) The term accurately describes the product (e.g., "fresh milk" or "freshly baked bread")

Fresh The food has been quickly frozen while still fresh; blanching is allowed before
frozen freezing to prevent nutrient breakdown

^aSee the regulations for acceptable synonyms

^bThese definitions have been simplified for this table; see the regulations for specific restrictions and additional requirements

^cProposed by FSIS for meat and poultry products

File NF115 under FOODS AND NUTRITION

A-1a, Buying

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