What is Front-of-Pack Labelling?

Codex Committee on Food Labelling
FAO/WHO Information Meeting on Front-of-Pack Nutrition Labelling

Charlottetown PEI, May 11, 2012

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Background

Burden of diet-related chronic disease

- Account for 60% of deaths worldwide

Unhealthy diet is a preventable risk factor

- Individuals and populations should limit:
  - Total calories
  - Saturated and trans fat
  - Sugar
  - Salt

1. WHO. Diet, Nutrition and the Prevention of Chronic Disease (2003);
2. WHO. Preventing chronic diseases: a vital investment. 2005.;
3. WHO. Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health (2005)
Nutrition Information on Foods

- A hierarchy of information about nutrition.
- To help consumers make food choices that will enhance health and reduce risk of chronic disease.

Adapted from: GUIDELINES ON NUTRITION LABELLING
GENERAL STANDARD FOR THE LABELLING OF PREPACKAGED FOODS
GUIDELINES FOR USE OF NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS
HEALTH CANADA PRESENTATIONS ON NUTRITION LABELLING
“Consumers require accurate, standardized and comprehensible information on the content of food items”

- WHO, 2005

Source: EUFIC. Global Update on Nutrition Labelling. 2013
Objectives of Nutrition Labelling

- Enable food choices that prevent and/or manage chronic disease
- Standardize presentation to ↓ consumer confusion
- Allow comparisons among foods at point of purchase

- Support and facilitate healthier product reformulations

Nutrition Facts table

Claims

- Enable informed dietary choices, consistent with health
- Consistent & not deceptive
- Based on recognized health & scientific criteria

# Types of Nutrition Information on Food Packages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrition Facts</th>
<th>Valeur nutritive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Per 1 cup (55 g) / par 1 tasse (55 g)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amount</strong></td>
<td><strong>% Daily Value</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calories / Calories</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat / Lipides</td>
<td>3 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saturated / saturés</td>
<td>0 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Trans / trans</td>
<td>0 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol / Cholestérol</td>
<td>0 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium / Sodium</td>
<td>50 mg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate / Glucides</td>
<td>30 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fibre / Fibres</td>
<td>3 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sugars / Sucres</td>
<td>4 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein / Protéines</td>
<td>4 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin A / Vitamine A</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin C / Vitamine C</td>
<td>0 %</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calcium / Calcium</td>
<td>4 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iron / Fer</td>
<td>8 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How is Canada doing since nutrition labelling regulations were introduced?

- Use of Nutrition Label hampered by:
  - Numeracy challenges
  - Confusing use of units: %DV, g, mg,
  - Serving size use and understanding
  - ↓ nutrition knowledge
    - Can’t interpret the information
    - Nutrients to limit/encourage not clear

- Product reformulation **NOT** evaluated

The Strategic Counsel. Focus testing of creatives for the nutrition facts education initiative. 2010.
Front-of-pack labelling as a complementary public health strategy?

- Simplified information on the key nutritional aspects/characteristics of foods
  - Potential to improve dietary intake and reduce diet-related chronic disease? 1-3:
    - Help consumers select healthier foods
    - Stimulate healthy product development and reformulation by manufacturers

Front-of-pack labelling

- First introduced in late 1980s by non-profit organizations and government agencies

- Now developed by food industry, retailers, non-industry experts, non-profit organizations, and government agencies

American Heart Association’s Heart Guide (1987)

# Types of Front-of-Pack Nutrition Labelling Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient-specific</th>
<th>Summary indicator</th>
<th>Food group information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Each serving contains:</strong></td>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Sensible Solution" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Whole Grain" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calories</strong> 218</td>
<td><img src="image3.png" alt="Healthy Choice" /></td>
<td><img src="image4.png" alt="Fruit Source" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>11%</strong> of an adult’s guideline daily amount</td>
<td><img src="image5.png" alt="1-100 Nutritional Scoring System" /></td>
<td><img src="image6.png" alt="2 Servings of Vegetables and Fruit" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sugars</strong> 6.3g</td>
<td><img src="image7.png" alt="Smart Choices" /></td>
<td><img src="image8.png" alt="4 Servings of Vegetables and Fruit" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7%</strong></td>
<td><img src="image9.png" alt="Snack Wise" /></td>
<td><img src="image10.png" alt="1 Serving Portion" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fat</strong> 3.2g</td>
<td><img src="image11.png" alt="Health Check" /></td>
<td><img src="image12.png" alt="Heart &amp; Stroke Foundation" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>5%</strong></td>
<td><img src="image13.png" alt="70 Awesome Calories" /></td>
<td><img src="image14.png" alt="Now it's Easier" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saturates</strong> 1.4g</td>
<td><img src="image15.png" alt="250 Calories/Bottle Calories/Bottle" /></td>
<td><img src="image16.png" alt="Find out more" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>7%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salt</strong> 0.2g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3%</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Fat</strong> 4.3g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Saturates</strong> 2.0g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Med Salt</strong> 1.60g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Sugars</strong> 6.0g</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Calories</strong> 275</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Basis Underlying different Front-of-Pack nutrition labelling systems

- Fact-based information on nutrient or food group content, OR

- Meets a nutritional standard
  - Qualifying or disqualifying threshold criteria
  - Relative criteria, i.e. “reduced” compared to reference, OR

- Evaluative or Interpretative
  - Ordinal rating scale, or
  - Classification
Nutrient Profiling – system used to set nutritional standards

- Classification based on nutritional composition \(^{5,7,8}\)

- Considerations:
  - Purpose and target audience,
  - Application of criteria (e.g. by category or across the board)
  - Which nutrients included (e.g. Nutrients to limit and/or Nutrients to encourage?)
  - Reference amount (per serving or per 100 g?)
  - Type of model (e.g. thresholds or algorithms)
  - The scientific basis for the criteria (e.g. nutrition recommendations, DRIs, “better than” etc)

FOPS in Canada

- First introduced in 1999 with the HSFC Health Check Program
- No specific regulations governing their use
- Multiple symbols developed by manufacturers & non-profit group
  - Proprietary to the system/manufacturer
  - Unique and different criteria for each system
  - Different levels of nutrients or food components
- Criticized by many health professionals as increasing consumer confusion
Food Label Information Program (FLIP)

- Cross-sectional analysis of pre-packaged food labels in the Canadian marketplace

- Food Label Information Program (FLIP)
  - Collected in 2010-2011
    - From top Canadian grocery retailers (by sales)
    - National and house brands
  - 10,487 foods from 22 food categories

Schermel et al, APMN 2013
Data recorded in FLIP

Food Label Information Program

Database ID
Nutrient Content Claims

Brand

Disease Risk Reduction Claims

Container size

Product name

Front-of-Pack Nutrition Rating Systems

Nutrition Information
Nutrition Marketing Appears on 48% of Food Packages

Schermel et al, APMN 2013
158 unique FOPS were identified

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th># of symbols</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nutrient-Specific Systems</td>
<td>80</td>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Examples of Nutrient-Specific Systems" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Indicator Systems</td>
<td>11</td>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Examples of Summary Indicator Systems" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food Group Information Systems</td>
<td>47</td>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Examples of Food Group Information Systems" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hybrids</td>
<td>20</td>
<td><img src="image4" alt="Examples of Hybrids" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Schermel et al, APMN 2013**
Summary Indicatory Systems were the most prevalent FOPS style

Schermel et al, APMN 2013
Current Situation in Canada

- US Institute of Medicine calls for a single, standardized, and universal FOPS (2011)
  - Simple, interpretative, and ordinal

- Minister of Health statement: Government has no intention to adopt standardized FOPS
  - “Canadian consumers already have... the tools they need to make healthy choices when they shop for groceries”
FOP systems as a public health strategy?

- Potential to improve dietary intake and reduce diet-related chronic disease\(^1\)-\(^3\):
  - Help consumers select healthier foods
  - Stimulate healthy product development and reformulation by manufacturers

Consumer Research on FOPs

- Self-Reported consumer studies (11, 2 with focus groups)
  - Consumer surveys on understanding and use of FOPs;
  - Examined differences between groups, e.g. SES, regional

- Observational consumer studies (9)
  - Data: supermarket observations, grocery receipts, computer label tasks, narrated shopping
  - May overestimate actual use in real life

Vyth et al, Nutrition Reviews 2012
Consumer Research on FOPs

- **Sales studies (2)**
  - Sales date before and after introduction of FOP program

- **Reformulation studies (3)**
  - Effects of FOP on product reformulation; most data self-reported by manufacturers

- **Health Outcome studies (4)**
  - Estimated effects of FOP on nutrient intakes or health outcomes using national food databases and population intake survey data

Vyth et al, Nutrition Reviews 2012
Consumer Response to FOP Systems

- Reportedly used by 23% of Canadian label readers\(^{11}\)
  - Actual use: <1 purchase/shopping trip\(^{12}\)

- Exposure to FOP systems
  - Internationally found on 2-67% of products\(^{2-3}\)
  - Canada, approx 18%

- Most consumers want FOP systems\(^{8}\)

- Most effective system unclear

Mean number of correct healthier choices

Borgmeier and Westenhoefer, 2009
Effectiveness of FOPS formats – Mean Comprehension Scores

No FOPS has been consistently found most effective across studies.

Adapted from: Feunekes et al. Appetite, 2008;50
FOPS stimulate product reformulation and new product development

Figure 1 Total number of products per product group that were newly developed, reformulated or already compliant with the Choices criteria.

Stimulating healthy product development and reformulation

- FOP can drive healthy product development and reformulation by participating manufacturers

- Healthfulness of products with FOP systems vs. those without
  - Healthier in comprehensive systems
  - Voluntary unregulated systems?

Thank You!

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