

Nutrition Labelling Scheme in Hong Kong

Workshop on Nutrition Labelling Scheme

Centre for Food Safety

Background

What is Nutrition Label?

- List out the nutrient content systemically
- Usually in tabular format
- Different ways of presentation are required by different countries

Nutrition Information 營養資料	
Per 100ml / 每100毫升	
Energy / 熱量	52 kcal / 千卡
Protein / 蛋白質	0 g / 克
Fat, total / 脂肪總量	0 g / 克
- Saturated fat / 飽和脂肪	0 g / 克
Cholesterol / 膽固醇	0 mg / 毫克
Carbohydrate / 碳水化合物	13 g / 克
- Sugars / 糖	9.5 g / 克
Dietary fibre / 膳食纖維	0.5 g / 克
Sodium / 鈉	2 mg / 毫克
Calcium / 鈣	2 mg / 毫克

International Situation

- Increasing number of countries/regions implement nutrition labelling scheme
- Nutrition labelling is mandatory in some developed countries (including US, Australia)
- In some other countries, nutrition labelling is mandatory when there is nutrient-related claims on prepackaged food (including EU countries, Singapore)

[Local Situation-Nutrition Labelling]

- Amendment Regulation on Nutrition Labelling will be enforced on 1 July 2010
- Currently, only some food have nutrition label on the package
- Various types of nutrition labels with different contents, expressions and formats found in the local market
- Difficult for consumers to use the nutrition labels and compare products; some claims may even be misleading or deceptive

Nutrition Labelling Scheme in Hong Kong

- Factors for consideration:
 - Principles adopted by Codex
 - Local public health situation
 - Diet-related chronic diseases (e.g., cancers, heart diseases, cerebrovascular diseases and diabetes mellitus) together account for about 60% of the mortality in 2005
 - Opinions from public and trade

Nutrition Labelling Scheme

Aims of the Scheme

- Facilitate consumers in making healthy food choices
- Encourage food manufacturers to apply sound nutrition principles in the formulation of foods which would benefit public health
- Regulate misleading or deceptive labels and claims on nutrition information

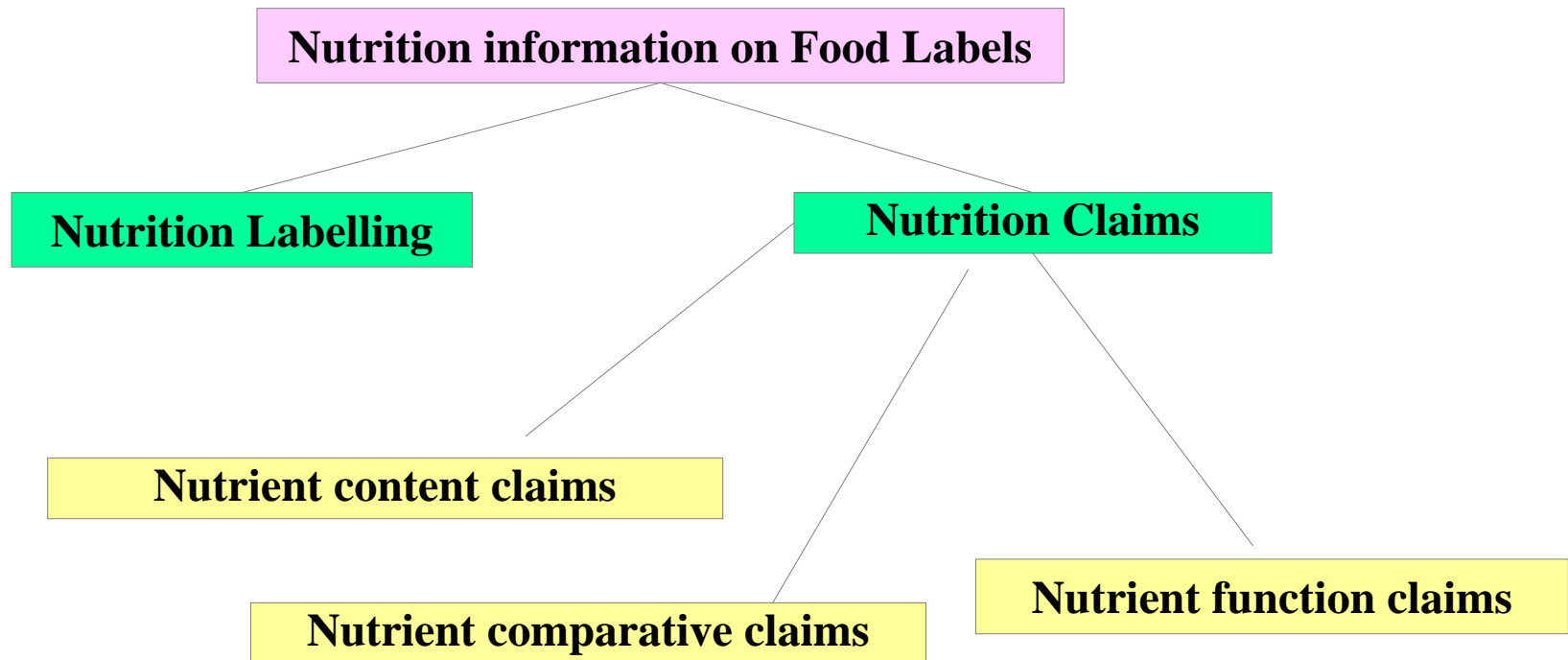
Importance of Regulations of Claims

- Previous food labelling regulation do not regulate nutrition claims
- No subjective level for making claims on nutrients
- Products with the same claim may have very different nutrient levels
- More food products with nutrition claims; Without legal standards, they may be confusing to consumers, according to studies by the Consumer Council

Scope

- General prepackaged food
- Not applicable to:
 - Formula and food intended to be consumed by children under the age of 36 months
 - Food for special dietary uses

Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) (Amendment: Requirements for Nutrition Labelling and Nutrition Claim) Regulation 2008



Required Nutrients on Nutrition Labels

- 1+7 (energy +7 core nutrients) –
i.e., energy, protein, carbohydrate*, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, sugars
- Claimed nutrients (when the claim is on any type of fat, cholesterol content must be declared as well)
- For other nutrients, declaration is voluntary

*The amount of carbohydrate can be declared as “available carbohydrate” or “total carbohydrate”. However, if declared as “total carbohydrate”, the dietary fibre content must be declared as well.

Required Nutrients on NL - Expressions

- Per 100 g (or 100 ml);
- Per package (if the package contains only one single serving); or
- Per serving (if the information on the serving size in g/ml and the no. of servings in the package are provided)

Required Nutrients on NL - Expressions

- Energy value – allow kcal or kJ
 - Nutrients – in gram, milligram or microgram
- * Encourage the trade to apply the same expression method to declare any other nutrients

Energy/Nutrients Expression

- Other than expressing energy value in kcal or kJ, or expressing nutrients in gram, milligram or microgram, energy value and nutrients can be expressed in % Nutrient Reference Value (%NRV)
- Must use Chinese NRV or any other reference value adopted by any national or international health authority when calculating the % NRV on nutrition label

Nutrition Claim

- Means any representation which states, suggests or implies that a food has particular nutritional properties
- Generally follow Codex standards
- Nutrition claims include:
 - Nutrient content claim
 - Nutrient comparative claim
 - Nutrient function claim

Food labels and advertisement are subject to the control

Examples of Permitted Nutrition Claims



Nutrient Content Claim – Examples



Nutrient Content Claim

- Describes the energy value or the content level of a nutrient contained in a food
- Adopt nutrient content claims in Codex and allow the ones commonly found in the local market, e.g., “low sugar”, “low protein” and “trans fat free”



[Permitted Nutrient Content Claims]

- Energy (low, free)
- Total fat (low, free)
[Allow “xx% fat free”, but must meet the conditions for “low fat”]
- Saturated fatty acids (low, free)
- Cholesterol (low, free)
- Trans fatty acids (free)
- Sugars (low, free)
- Sodium (low, very low, free)
- Protein (low, source, high)
- Vitamins and minerals [except sodium] (source, high)
- Dietary fibre (source, high)

Nutrient Comparative Claim- Examples



Nutrient Comparative Claim

- Means a nutrition claim that describes the energy value or the content level of a nutrient in different versions of the same food or similar food
- E.g., Less fat – Contain 25% less fat as compared to the regular product of the same brand
- Nutrients for making nutrient comparative claims must have conditions under the nutrient content claim

Nutrient Function Claim- Examples

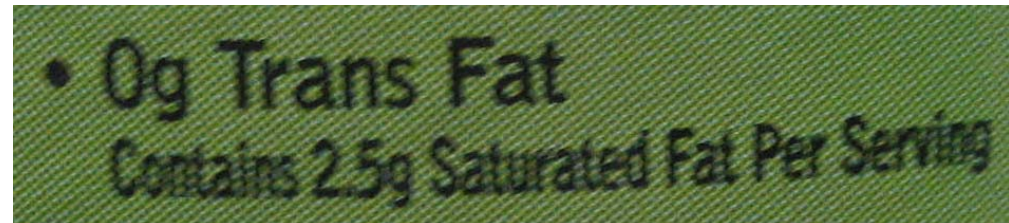


Nutrient function claim

- Means a nutrition claim that describes the physiological role of a nutrient in growth, development and normal functions of the body
- E.g., Calcium aids the development of strong bones and teeth
- Nutrients for making nutrient function claims must have a Chinese NRV or conditions for making nutrient content claims

Other Declarations

- Will not allow selected nutrient content claims as there are no international consensus (such as “Omega-3”)
- Allow the expressions of energy value/nutrients in actual amounts provided that the expressions do not place any special emphasis on the high content, low content, presence or absence of energy or that nutrient contained in the food
(e.g. contain xx mg of omega-3 per 100 gram)



Other Declarations

- Mentioning of information on lactose and gluten do not constitute a nutrition claim

低乳糖

Produced in a nut-free environment
Suitable for Vegetarians/Vegans
Dairy and Lactose free
Non-GM Soya beans

✓ OVEN BAKED
✓ CHOLESTEROL FREE
✓ GLUTEN FREE
✓ LOW IN SATURATED FAT
✓ SUITABLE FOR VEGETARIANS

LOW LACTOSE

GLUTEN FREE

Other Declarations

- Do not affect “Organic” or “Natural” labels



Other Declarations

- The followings are not considered as nutrition claims:
 - “No MSG”
 - “No hydrogenated oil”
 - “Caffeine-free”
 - “With electrolytes”
 - “Unsweetened” / “Less sweet”
 - “Casein free”
 - “Contains phenylalanine”
 - Claims on glycaemic index
 - Non GM

Exemptions- Principles

- Practical difficulty for the trade
 - *e.g., prepackaged food packed in a container which has a total surface area of less than 100cm²*
- The food does not contain (meeting definition of zero) of energy and core nutrients
- The food is fresh in nature without any addition of ingredient, and is not subject to processing
 - *e.g., fresh and dried fruits and vegetables*
- Prepackaged food with small sales volume

Exempt Items

1. Prepackaged food with an alcoholic strength by volume of more than 1.2% as determined in the manner described in the definition of “alcoholic strength” in section 53 of the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance (Cap. 109).
2. Prepackaged food sold at a catering establishment which is usually bought for immediate consumption.
3. Individually wrapped confectionery products in a fancy form intended for sale as single items.
4. Individually wrapped preserved fruits which are not enclosed in any further packaging and which are intended for sale as single items.
5. Prepackaged food packed in a container which has a total surface area of less than 100 cm².

Exempt Items

6. Fruit or vegetable, whether fresh, chilled, frozen or dried –
 - (a) packed in a container which contains no other ingredient; and
 - (b) to which no other ingredient has been added.
7. Carbonated water –
 - (a) to which no ingredient other than carbon dioxide has been added; and
 - (b) the marking or label of which indicates that it has been carbonated.
8. Spring water and mineral water (including water to which minerals have been artificially added and which is described as mineral water).
9. Prepackaged food which does not have any energy value or contain any content of any core nutrients

Exempt Items

10. Meat, marine or fresh water fish or any other form of aquatic life commonly used for human consumption –
 - (a) which is in a raw state;
 - (b) packed in a container which contains no other ingredient; and
 - (c) to which no other ingredient has been added.
11. Prepackaged food containing assorted ingredients which is –
 - (a) prepared and sold to an ultimate consumer at the same premises;
 - (b) not intended for sale for immediate consumption; and
 - (c) intended to be subjected to a process of cooking for the purpose of rendering it fit for human consumption.

Exempt Items

12. Soup pack containing assorted ingredients –
 - (a) which has not been subjected to any process of heating in the course of manufacture;
 - (b) which is not intended for sale for immediate consumption; and
 - (c) which is intended to be subjected to a process of cooking for the purpose of rendering it fit for human consumption in the form of soup.
13. Prepackaged food sold –
 - (a) by a charitable institution or trust of a public character which is exempt from tax under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112); and
 - (b) in an event held for charitable purposes.

Exempt Items

14. Prepackaged food –

(a) processed and sold to an ultimate consumer at the same premises; or

(b) processed at a place which is adjacent to, or in the immediate vicinity of, the premises where the food is sold to an ultimate consumer, and not offered for sale outside the premises referred to in paragraph (a) or (b).

15. Prepackaged food sold to a catering establishment as a single item.

16. Prepackaged food with annual sales volume not exceeding 30000 units (*The trade must apply for approval and subject to other conditions, such as submitting monthly sales data*)

Note:

- Exempt Item 16 (small volume exemption) :
If there is any nutrition claim on the food label/in the advertisement, the exemption status will be removed
- Exempt Items 1-15 :
If there is any nutrition label or any nutrition claim on the food label/in the advertisement, the exemption status will be removed

Assistance to Trade?

- Technical guidance notes
- Method guidance notes
- Workshops
- Hotline
 - 24-Hour Hotline: 2868 0000
 - Helpdesk: 2381 6096
- Online resources (www.cfs.gov.hk):
 - Frequently Asked Questions
 - Other information, e.g., Nutrition Label Calculator

Time Frame

- About 2 years grace period
- Enforce on 1 July 2010
(all prepackage food must have a nutrition label from this date onwards)

~ Thank you ~