

NutriGet

Introducing Nutrition Labelling Scheme

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The Food and Drug (Composition and Labelling) (Amendment: Requirements for Nutrition Labelling and Nutrition Claim) Regulation 2008 signifies a new era of food labelling in Hong Kong as most prepackaged food sold in Hong Kong will have nutrition labelling beginning 1 July 2010.

Why a Nutrition Labelling Scheme is needed?

A Nutrition Labelling Scheme (the Scheme) aims to assist consumers to make informed food choices, encourage food manufacturers to apply sound nutrition principles in the formulation of foods, and regulate misleading or deceptive labels and claims. Without the Scheme, provision of nutrition information is not mandatory and consumers may not know the nutrient contents of many products.

What is in the Scheme?

Both nutrition labels and nutrition claims are covered in the Scheme. Nutrition labels provide consumers with information on nutrient values of the food so that they can make use of the information to choose foods that are good for their health. Setting conditions for nutrition claims standardise the meaning of various claims so that they will become trustworthy for consumers. For example, a product with a claim of "low sugars" should contain not more than 5 g of sugars per 100 g/mL of the food.

Nutrition Labels

Consumers can find "1+7" items (i.e. the values of energy plus seven specified nutrients – protein, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, carbohydrates, sugars and sodium) on nutrition labels.

Nutrition Claims

Generally, claims are eye-catching descriptors found on food packages. They can serve as a quick reference for selected nutrition information. They may highlight the content of certain nutrients (e.g. low fat, high fibre, etc.), or tell consumers how the nutrient content of a particular food product differs from another similar food (e.g., lower cholesterol), or describe the physiological function of a nutrient which is present in the food (e.g. calcium builds strong bones). These nutrition claims will be regulated starting 1 July 2010 and they must meet certain specified conditions before making the claims.



Will all prepackaged foods have Nutrition Labels?

Majority of the prepackaged foods will have nutrition labels after 1 July 2010. However, some products are exempted from the requirements due to various reasons. For example, very small packages (e.g. a container with a total surface area of less than 100 cm²). Foods which contain insignificant amount (nearly zero) of energy and specified nutrients (e.g. distilled water), as well as raw meat, fresh fruits and vegetables without any addition of ingredient are also exempted from the nutrition labelling requirements.

How to make use of the information on the Nutrition Label?

Consumers can use the information on the nutrition label in many ways –

- 1 To compare nutrient contents among different foods for a healthier choice, e.g. to choose food that is lower in fat, sodium (or salt) and sugars.
- 2 To understand the nutrient contents of food and estimate their contribution to the overall diet.
- 3 To meet individual's dietary needs.

By applying the information on nutrition labels, consumers can make food choices that are good for health. So let's start today – Read the Nutrition Labels!

Want to learn more?

Check the CFS's website www.nutritionlabel.gov.hk, or call the 24-hour hotline (Tel. No. 2868 0000)

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