

**Turn and look  
for healthier food choices**

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**A closer look at  
Nutrition Labelling**

**UNDERSTANDING  
NUTRITION CLAIMS**



# NUTRITION CLAIMS

Nutrition claims, such as low fat and higher calcium, are often found on food packages. These claims are used to emphasise selected nutritional properties of foods. From 1<sup>st</sup> July 2010, under the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) (Amendment: Requirements for Nutrition Labelling and Nutrition Claim) Regulation 2008 ("the Amendment Regulation"), nutrition claims must meet certain specified conditions. The nutrition claims will become trustworthy.



The amount of those nutrients that are the subjects of nutrition claims must be included in the nutrition label. Also, if a nutrition claim is made on any type of fat (e.g. total fat, saturated fat and trans fat), the amount of cholesterol must be provided as well.

# UNDERSTANDING NUTRITION CLAIMS



There are **3** main types of nutrition claims:

## 1 Nutrient content claim

is related to the contents of nutrients found in food. It describes the level of a nutrient contained in a food, such as, “**High calcium**”, “**Low fat**” and “**Sugars free**”. Overall speaking, there are five categories of nutrient content claims namely “**Free**” claim, “**Very low**” claim, “**Low**” claim, “**Source**” claim and “**High**” claim. Words with similar meaning may be used as well.



## FREE

The following are some examples of claims under each category.

| Claim  | Meaning of claim   | Examples with conditions stipulated in law   |
|--|--|--|
| Free; No; Zero; Without; Does not contain                | Insignificant amount of a particular nutrient found in the food; None or hardly any of this nutrient | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fat free (containing not more than 0.5 g of fat per 100 g/mL of food)</li> <li>● Sugars free (containing not more than 0.5 g of sugars per 100 g/mL of food)</li> <li>● Sodium free (containing not more than 5 mg of sodium per 100 g/mL of food)</li> </ul>   |
| Very low; Extremely low; Super low (for sodium only)     | A very small amount of sodium found in the food  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Very low sodium (containing not more than 40 mg of sodium per 100 g/mL of food)</li> </ul>  |
| Low; Little; Low source; Few; Contains a small amount of | A small amount of nutrient found in the food   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Low fat (containing not more than 3 g of fat per 100 g of solid food; not more than 1.5 g of fat per 100 mL of liquid food)</li> <li>● Low sugars (containing not more than 5 g of sugars per 100 g/mL of food)</li> <li>● Low sodium (containing not more than 120 mg of sodium per 100 g/mL of food)</li> </ul> |

## LOW ZERO

## WITHOUT

## SUPER LOW

## CONTAINS A SMALL AMOUNT OF

## FEW

## LOW SOURCE

## DOES NOT CONTAIN

CONTAINS HIGH PROVIDES SOURCE

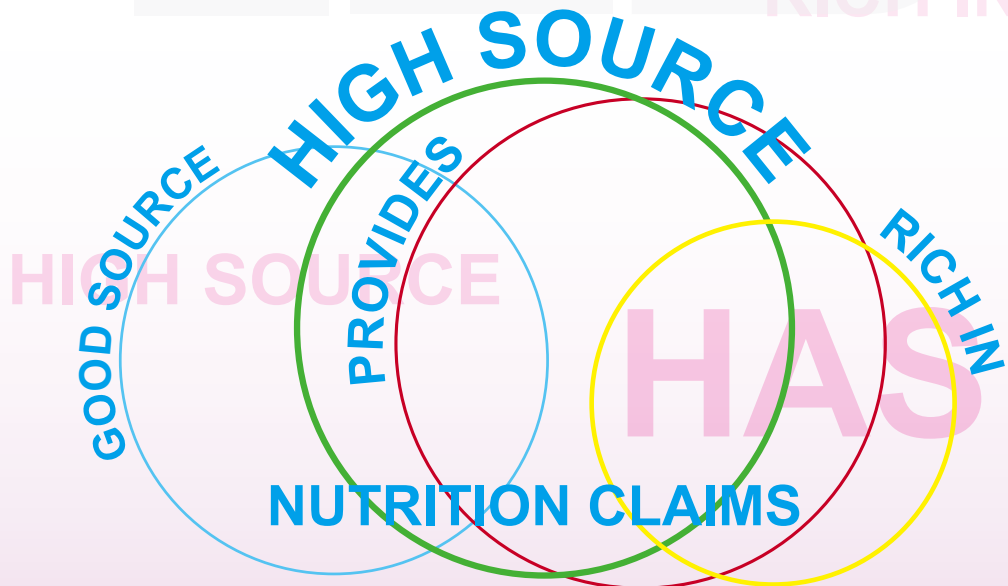
| Claim  | Meaning of claim   | Examples with conditions stipulated in law   |
|--|--|--|
| Source;<br>Contains; With;<br>Provides; Has                    | A significant amount of a particular nutrient found in the food;<br>Contains a useful amount of this nutrient    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Source of calcium (containing not less than 120 mg of calcium per 100 g of solid food; not less than 60 mg of calcium per 100 mL of liquid food)</li> </ul> |
| High;<br>Good source;<br>High source;<br>Rich in;<br>Plenty of | A very significant amount of a particular nutrient found in the food;<br>Contains a high amount of this nutrient | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>High calcium (containing not less than 240 mg of calcium per 100 g of solid food; not less than 120 mg of calcium per 100 mL of liquid food)</li> </ul>     |



**Nutrient comparative claim** is also related to the contents of nutrients found in the food. Rather than describing the nutrient level, nutrient comparative claim compares the nutrient levels of two or more similar food products, such as “Reduced fat - 25% less than the regular product of the same brand”. Similar to nutrient content claims, wordings with similar meaning may be used. The following are some examples of comparative claims.

| Claim  | Meaning of claim  | Examples with conditions stipulated in law*   |
|--|---|---|
| Less;<br>Reduced;<br>Lower;<br>Fewer; Light          | Contains considerably less of a particular nutrient when compared with a similar food | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduced in fat (at least 25% less fat)</li> </ul>                |
| Higher; Extra;<br>Added; More;<br>Plus;<br>Increased | Contains considerably more of a particular nutrient when compared with a similar food | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extra dietary fibre (at least 25% more dietary fibre)</li> </ul> |

\*For detailed conditions, please refer to the Amendment Regulation and Technical Guidance Notes on Nutrition Labelling and Nutrition Claims: [http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food\\_leg/food\\_leg\\_nl\\_guidance.html](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food_leg/food_leg_nl_guidance.html)



# Calcium builds strong bones



3

**Nutrient function claim** describes the physiological role of a nutrient in growth, development and normal functions of the body (e.g. **“Calcium builds strong bones.”**). It must fulfil several general principles, such as the claim must be supported by science and the information about the physiological role of the claimed nutrient must be included in the claim. Nutrient function claims that are commonly used, such as “Protein helps build and repair body tissues” and “Iron is a factor in red blood cell formation”, can be found on the webpage of the Centre for Food Safety:

[http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food\\_leg/files/Acceptable\\_Nutrient\\_Function\\_Claims\\_bilingual.pdf](http://www.cfs.gov.hk/english/food_leg/files/Acceptable_Nutrient_Function_Claims_bilingual.pdf)

Nutrition claims should be used as a quick reference only. The content value of the claimed nutrient can be found on the nutrition label. At any time, consumers should not focus only on the claimed nutrients. We advise consumers to refer to the nutrition label for detailed information on the overall nutritional property of the food product for making healthy food choices. For instance, although a product with a “low sugars” claim should have a low enough sugars content in order to bear such claim, consumers should refer to the nutrition label to ascertain that the product does not have high contents of fat or energy, particularly if he/she is interested in weight maintenance, for example. In addition, a product with a “sugars free” claim does not necessarily mean that it is free of carbohydrates. Consumers, particularly diabetic patients, should refer to the nutrition label to verify the carbohydrates content of the product.

| Nutrition Information 營養資料 |             |
|----------------------------|-------------|
| Per 100g/ 每100克            |             |
| Energy/ 能量                 | 198kcal/ 千卡 |
| Protein/ 蛋白質               | 8g/ 克       |
| Total fat/ 總脂肪             | 0.7g/ 克     |
| - Saturated fat/ 飽和脂肪      | 0.1g/ 克     |
| - Trans fat/ 反式脂肪          |             |
| Carbohydrates/ 碳水化合物       |             |
| - Sugars/ 糖                | 0.8g/ 克     |
| Sodium/ 鈉                  |             |

THIS PAMPHLET IS PREPARED BY THE TASK FORCE ON NUTRITION LABELLING EDUCATION COMPRISING MEMBERS FROM:

- Association of Hong Kong Nursing Staff
- Centre for Health Education and Health Promotion, The Chinese University of Hong Kong
- Committee on Home-School Co-operation
- Consumer Council
- Department of Health
- Education Bureau
- Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
- Hong Kong Dietitians Association
- Hong Kong Nutrition Association
- Hospital Authority
- The Hong Kong Medical Association

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