



# your body matters



Teacher notes C: Food Labelling

**Nourishing Body & Mind for a Healthy Life**

A Primary Health and Wellbeing Curriculum Pack

Revised Version 2023



## Teacher notes C: Food Labelling

Associated lesson plans		
Primary Stage	Lesson	Title
4	4.3 (1)	Being Careful with Food
4	4.3 (2)	Being careful with Food: Bacteria
<b>Useful websites</b>	<p><a href="https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/">https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/</a>  <i>Has a range of educational resources including interactive games on allergies, the Eatwell guide, food hygiene and much more</i></p> <p><a href="http://www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/food-and-nutrition/food-packaging/food-labelling/">www.nhsinform.scot/healthy-living/food-and-nutrition/food-packaging/food-labelling/</a>  <i>NHS Inform – Food Labelling</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/education-resources/label-it">https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/education-resources/label-it</a>  <i>Food Standards Scotland – Food labels activity</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/education-resources/its-a-date">https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/education-resources/its-a-date</a>  <i>Food Standards Scotland – Best before and use by activity</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUh2aU3CoA4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eUh2aU3CoA4</a>  <i>Food Standards Agency – Food labels: What you need to know</i></p> <p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tL8SeX-euko">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tL8SeX-euko</a>  <i>Food Standards Agency – Front of pack labelling – what you need to know</i></p>	

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## Why do we have food labels?

Food labels are important as they provide information to consumers that will inform their food choices i.e. between different foods, brands and flavours. There is a legal requirement for much of the information that must be provided on food labels. UK laws regarding food labelling are based on EU community legislation which provides some consistency across the EU. This consistency makes the import and export of packaged foods easier across the EU countries.

## What information can food labels provide?

Food labelling tells us two important pieces of information:

1. Specific information about the food which is required to be included in accordance with labelling laws e.g. name of food, weight or volume, ingredients, date and storage conditions, preparation instructions, name and address of manufacturer. (There are some exceptions to food labelling laws i.e. in the UK foods sold loose or unpackaged are currently exempt from most of the food labelling laws.)
2. Additional information that is not required by law such as nutrition information and cooking instructions/serving suggestions.

## Specific Information (required by law)

1. Name or description  
A label must clearly state the name of a food or give an accurate description of the food's ingredients and how it has been processed e.g. 'dried', 'salted', 'smoked'. This information cannot be misleading in any way and should describe any differences between similar foods to not be ambiguous e.g. 'fruit flavoured yoghurt' will be flavoured with artificial flavourings while 'fruit yoghurt' will be flavoured with real fruit.
2. List of ingredients  
If a food product has two or more ingredients (including water and additives), they must be listed under the heading "ingredients" or a suitable heading which includes the word "ingredients". Ingredients are listed in order of their weight within the food product; from the largest ingredient to the smallest and must be given in the language of the country in which the food is sold.

Some foods are exempt from the need to display an ingredient list, for example: fresh fruit and vegetables, carbonated water and foods consisting of a single ingredient etc.

### 3. Allergen information

Where a food product contains any of the 14 allergens (see below), required to be declared by law, as ingredients, these allergens must be listed and emphasised within any ingredients list by using a different font, style (italics), background colour or by bold text. This enables consumers to understand more about the ingredients in packaged foods and are helpful for those with food allergies and intolerances who need to avoid certain foods.

Example of allergen information found on a food label. You can see the allergens have been highlighted in bold.

<b>Ingredients</b>
Dried and sweetened dried fruit (25%) [sultanas, sweetened dried pineapple (10%) (sugar, pineapple, acid: citric acid, preservative: <b>sulphur dioxide</b> ), dates, raisins], <b>barley</b> flakes, <b>oat</b> flakes, <b>wheat</b> flakes, toasted and malted <b>wheat</b> flakes ( <b>wheat</b> , <b>barley</b> malt extract).
<b>Allergy advice</b>
For allergens, see ingredients in bold. May also contain nuts and milk.

**The 14 allergens are;** cereals containing gluten, eggs, mustard, sesame seeds, tree nuts, crustaceans, sulphur dioxide and sulphites, celery, milk, soybeans, peanuts, fish, molluscs, lupin.



GLUTEN



LUPIN



CELERY



CRUSTACEANS



MILK



SULPHUR DIOXIDE



SESAME



MOLLUSCS



MUSTARD



TREE NUTS



EGG



FISH



SOYBEANS



PEANUTS

## 'Natasha's Law'

From 1 October 2021, changes to allergen labelling requirements, also known as Natasha's Law, came into force for food that is prepacked for direct sale (food which is packaged at the same place it is offered or sold to consumers and is in this packaging before it is ordered or selected, such as sandwiches, bakery products and fast food). Prepacked for direct sale food must have a label that displays the name of the food and a full ingredients list, with allergenic ingredients emphasised within it, to help people make safer choices.

### 4. Quantitative Ingredient Declaration (QUID)

The QUID highlights the percentage of ingredients contained in a food product. This is required when the ingredient;

- appears in the name of the food or is usually associated with that name by the consumer
- is emphasised on the labelling in words, pictures or graphics e.g., strawberry yoghurt or steak pie
- is essential to characterise a food and to distinguish it from products with which it might be confused because of its name or appearance.

The indication of quantity of an ingredient or category of ingredients must:

- be displayed as a percentage, and
- appear either in or immediately next to the name of the food or in the list of ingredients in connection with the ingredient or category of ingredients in question.

### 5. Net Quantity

All packaged foods above 5g or 5ml must show the net quantity on the label to comply with the Food Information Regulations.

Foods that are packaged in liquid (or an ice glaze) must show the drained net weight.

The net quantity declaration is not mandatory in the case of foods:

- (a) which are subject to considerable losses in their volume or mass and which are sold by number or weighed in the presence of the purchaser;
- (b) the net quantity of which is less than 5 g or 5 ml, unless these are herbs or spices;
- (c) normally sold by number, provided that the number of items can clearly be seen and easily counted from the outside or, if not, is indicated on the labelling.

## 6. Weight or volume

The weight does not need to be exact and can be provided within a few grams of the actual weight. Foods carrying the symbol 'e' next to their weight should be compliant with EU law that states that the average pack must be at least the weight shown. Products that weigh less than 5g do not need to declare their weight.

### 1. Storage conditions and date labelling

Perishable foods that can spoil quickly have a 'use by' date. If kept for too long these foods can cause food poisoning even though they may not taste differently. Other foods have a 'best before' date. The flavour, colour and texture of these foods may not be at their best but should be safe to eat if stored according to the instructions on the label.

Date marks such as 'display until' or 'sell by' often appear near or next to the 'best before' or 'use by' date. They are used by some shops to assist with stock control and are instructions for shop staff, not shoppers. Other guidance on the mode of storage has become universal. For example, a simple star system is used for refrigeration and freezer storage instructions; what temperature the food should be held at and for how long:

\*- 6°C 1 week  
(pre frozen food only)  
\*\* - 12°C 1 month  
(pre frozen food only)  
\*\*\* - 18°C 3 months  
(pre frozen food only)  
\*\*\*\* - 18°C or colder 6 months  
(pre frozen food; can also be  
used to freeze fresh food from  
room temperature)

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## 7. Preparation instructions

Instructions on how to prepare and cook the food appropriately, including for heating in a microwave oven, must be given on the label if they are needed. If the food must be heated, the temperature of the oven and the cooking time will usually be stated. These instructions should ensure that foods are heated to a core temperature of 75° C to minimise the risk of food poisoning.

## 8. Name and address of the manufacturer, packer or seller

Food businesses must include a business name and address on the packaging or food label. This must be either:

- the name of the business whose name the food is marketed under; or
- the address of the business that has imported the food.

If the food business is not in NI or EU, they must include the address of the importer, based in NI or the EU. From 1 October 2022, food products sold in GB must include a UK, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man address for the food business. If the food business is not in GB, they must include the address of the importer, based in the UK, Channel Islands or the Isle of Man. The address provided needs to be a physical address where your business can be contacted by mail. You cannot use an e-mail address or phone number. Providing an address gives consumers the opportunity to contact the manufacturer if they have a complaint about the product or if they want to know more about it.

## 9. Country or place of origin or provenance

In accordance with the FIC Regulations, the indication of the country of origin or place of provenance of a food shall be mandatory where failure to indicate this might mislead the consumer as to the true country of origin or place of provenance of the food.

## 10. Additional labelling requirements (not required by law)

There are additional labelling requirements for certain food and drink products specifically if they contain:

- sweeteners or sugars
- aspartame and colourings
- iquorice
- caffeine
- polyols

## 11. Nutritional Declaration

The mandatory nutrition declaration must be clearly presented in a specific format and give values for energy and six nutrients. The values must be given in the units (including both kJ and kcal for energy) per 100g/ml, and the nutrition declaration must meet the minimum font size requirements.

If nutritional information is provided (regardless of a claim made) there are several guidelines that must be followed:

- All nutritional information must be given in values per 100g or per 100ml of food. Values for a portion or serving can also be used, provided that the number or size of portions/servings is quantified on the label.
- Energy value must be given in kilojoules (kJ) and kilocalories (kcal).
- Protein, carbohydrate and fat content must be given in grams (g).
- If a claim is made, the amounts of sugars, saturates, fibre and sodium (or salt) should be provided.
- Amounts of other nutrients can be included optionally (unless a claim is made); poly unsaturated fatty acids, monounsaturated fatty acids, vitamins and minerals.

## What are nutrition and health claims?

**Nutrition claims:** these relate to what a product does or doesn't contain or contains in a higher or lower amount. For example:

- 'Sugar free' (must contain less than 0.5g sugars per 100g)
- 'Low fat' (must contain less than 3g fat per 100g)
- 'High in fibre' (must contain at least 6g fibre per 100g)
- 'Source of vitamin D' (must contain at least 15% of the RI for vitamin D per 100g)

**Health Claims:** these are claims that state or suggest there is a relationship between a product and health. For example:

- "Calcium is needed for the maintenance of normal bones"
- "Potassium contributes to the maintenance of normal blood pressure"
- "Vitamin C contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue"
- "Folate contributes to maternal tissue growth during pregnancy"

Health claims on food labels are not allowed to state that the food can prevent, treat or cure any disease or medical condition, neither are they allowed to refer to a rate or amount of weight loss.

# Methods used to read & understand food labelling

## The Traffic Light System and Reference Intakes (RI's)

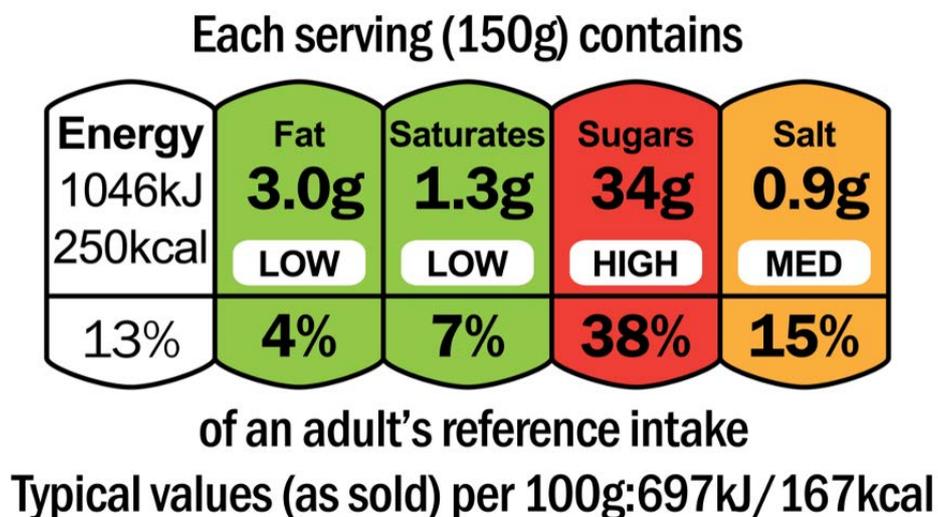
Front-of-pack labelling in the UK is voluntary but most of the major supermarkets and many food manufacturers provide this and use the government's recommended format - red, amber, green colour-coding and percentage reference intakes (RIs) - or as you may better recognise it - traffic light labelling. This can look a bit different on various products but there are some general parts of the food label that remain the same.

### Traffic light system

- Traffic lights are normally on the front of packaging
- Traffic lights provide information on whether a food is high, medium or low in calories, fat, saturated fat, sugar or salt per serving\* or 100g\* (shown in the label below).
- Red colour coding means the food or drink is high in nutrient(s) and we should try to have these foods less often or eat them in small amounts.
- Amber colour coding means medium in this nutrient(s), and if a food contains mostly amber you can eat it most of the time.
- Green colour coding means low in this nutrient(s), and the more green a label displays the healthier the choice.
- For a healthier choice, try to pick products with more green and amber colours and fewer red.

\*Please note that the portion sizes you eat may be different from the one that manufacturers recommend or those per 100g values at the back of the packet.

Example of traffic light front of pack labelling system:



## Reference Intakes (RI's):

- RI's replaced GDA's on food labelling.
- The Reference Intake (RI) is a guide to the approximate daily amount of nutrients (fats, saturated fats, salt and sugar) and the energy you need for a healthy diet. These only apply to adults and are shown as a percentage (%) on food labels.
- RI's are based on the requirements for an average-sized adult woman doing an average amount of activity.

**Example:** If a portion of food states that it provides 50% RI for saturated fat, this means that the serving contains half of your daily maximum amount of saturated fat, and over the rest of the day, options lower in saturated fat should be chosen (BNF, 2022). For children, calorie intake will vary depending on several factors - such as age and how physically active they are.

## Back of pack labels

Most pre-packed products (by law) provide a nutrition label on the back of pack. This back-of-pack information must be displayed as per 100g or 100ml of the product but may also be additionally displayed as per portion.

By Law back of pack* nutrition labels must include:	This is displayed as:
<b>Energy</b>	In calories (kcal) and kilojoules (kJ)
<b>Fat content</b>	In grams (g)
<b>Saturated fat content</b>	In grams (g)
<b>Carbohydrate content</b>	In grams (g)
<b>Sugar content</b>	In grams (g)
<b>Protein content</b>	In grams (g)
<b>Salt content</b>	In grams (g)

Generally, this information will be displayed like the example below:

Typical values	100g contains	Each slice (typically 44g) contains
Energy	985kJ	435kJ
	235kcal	105kcal
Fat	1.5g	0.7g
of which saturates	0.3g	0.1g
Carbohydrate	45.5g	20.0g
of which sugars	3.8g	1.7g
Protein	7.7g	3.4g
Salt	1.0	0.4g

In addition to the seven values above that must be on a nutrition label by law, there may also be information on fibre, starch, mono/polyunsaturated fats/polyols and any vitamins or minerals.

For more information visit <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/putting-it-into-practice/food-labelling/looking-at-labels/>

## High, medium or low guidance for food

Text	LOW <sup>8</sup>	MEDIUM	HIGH	
Colour code	Green	Amber	Red	
			>25% of RIs	>30% of RIs
Fat	≤ 3.0g/100g	> 3.0g to ≤ 17.5g/100g	> 17.5g/100g	> 21g/portion
Saturates	≤ 1.5g/100g	> 1.5g to ≤ 5.0g/100g	> 5.0g/100g	> 6.0g/portion
(Total) Sugars	≤ 5.0g/100g	> 5.0g to ≤ 22.5g /100g	> 22.5g/100g	> 27g/portion
Salt	≤ 0.3g/100g	> 0.3g to ≤ 1.5g/100g	>1.5g/100g	>1.8g/portion

## High, medium or low guidance for drinks:

Text	LOW <sup>9</sup>	MEDIUM	HIGH	
Colour code	Green	Amber	Red	
			>12.5% of RIs	>15% of RIs
Fat	≤ 1.5g/100ml	> 1.5g to ≤ 8.75g/100ml	> 8.75g/100ml	>10.5g/portion
Saturates	≤ 0.75g/100ml	> 0.75g to ≤ 2.5g/100ml	> 2.5g/100ml	> 3g/portion
(Total) Sugars	≤ 2.5g/100ml	> 2.5g to ≤ 11.25g/100ml	> 11.25g/100ml	> 13.5g/portion
Salt	≤ 0.3g/100ml	>0.3g to ≤0.75g/100ml	> 0.75g/100ml	> 0.9g/portion

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