

Nutritional Information Tables

Nutritional information tables inform consumers about the amount of fats, saturated fats, sugars, carbohydrates, proteins and salt in different pre-packaged foods and to a prescribed format of presentation. This information can help the consumer to choose food appropriate to different dietary needs or to find out how nutritious a food is. If you are producing wrapped food products, you will need to include a nutrition information table on labels for your products.

What is a nutrition table and what does it look like?

Most pre-packed foods have a nutrition label on the back or side of the packaging, situated close to the list of ingredients. These labels include information on energy in kilojoules (kJ) and kilocalories (kcal), usually referred to as calories. They also include information on fat, of which saturates (saturated fat), carbohydrate, of which sugars, protein and salt. All nutrition information is provided per 100 grams and sometimes per portion or serving (of defined size) of the food.

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-read-food-labels/>

When is a nutritional information table compulsory?

Some information triggers the need to include a nutritional information table. As well as the required information for food products, you will need to include a nutritional information declaration table if you make any claims on the packaging about being gluten-free, low fat or healthy.

Exemptions

Nutritional information can be mandatory for pre-packaged foods in some cases, but there are some exemptions too. Pre-packed food from manufacturers meeting the Food Standards Agency's definition of a micro business, supplied direct to the consumer from their own premises (including distance sales, e.g. internet sales), do not need to have nutrition labelling under this exemption. Pre-packed food from those micro businesses supplied to the consumer via a third party, if this third party is a local retailer supplying direct to the consumer, need not have nutrition labelling under this exemption. Descriptions of micro businesses and third parties can be found here: <https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/labelling-of-prepacked-foods-nutrition-declaration#Exemptionforsmallmanufacturers>

This Q&A document can help answer any queries you may have and details more about the exemptions.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/qanda-nutritionalrequirements11692011.pdf>

Even if you are exempt from supplying a nutritional information table on your products, many consumers now expect to see one in a retail environment, or use them as a basis to make a choice whether to buy a product so it may be in your interest to include one.

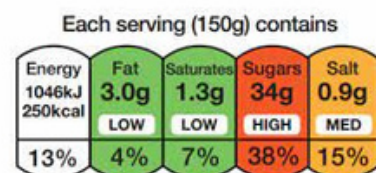
Front of Pack or Traffic Light nutritional information

Another type of nutrition labelling can be found on the front of a lot of packaging, commonly known as traffic light labelling. Traffic light labelling can show at a quick glance whether products contain higher rates of fats, saturated fat, salt and sugars of recommended daily amounts. **Red = High amount Amber = Medium Green - Low**

The NHS states 'In short, the more green on the label, the healthier the choice. If you buy a food that has all or mostly green on the label, you know straight away that it's a healthier choice. Amber means neither high nor low, so you can eat foods with all or mostly amber on the label most of the time. But any red on the label means the food is high in fat, saturated fat, salt or sugars, and these are the foods we should cut down on.'

Chicken & Vegetable Broth				
A soup made with vegetables, cooked chicken and pearl barley. 600g e				
Ingredients				
Water, Carrot (10%), Onion, Chicken (6%), Potato (5%), Spinach (2%), Peas (2%), Cabbage (2%), Celery (2%), Chicken stock (chicken skin, water, chicken extract, chicken, sugar, salt, cornflour, chicken fat, onion concentrate), Potato starch, Pearl barley, Rapeseed oil, Garlic purée, Salt, Black pepper.				
! ALLERGY ADVICE				
For allergens, including cereals containing gluten, see ingredients in bold.				
! Warning				
Although every care has been taken to remove bones, some may remain.				
Nutrition				
Typical values (as consumed)	per 100g	per 1/2 pot (300g)	%RI	your RI*
Energy	167kJ 40kcal	501kJ 119kcal	6%	8400kJ 2000kcal
Fat	1.2g	3.6g	5%	70g
of which saturates	0.2g	0.6g	3%	20g
Carbohydrate	4.2g	12.6g		
of which sugars	1.2g	3.6g	4%	90g
Fibre	1.1g	3.3g		
Protein	2.5g	7.5g		
Salt	0.5g	1.5g	25%	6g

*Reference intake of an average adult (8400kJ/2000kcal) (RI). Contains 2 portions.



of an adult's reference intake
Typical values (as sold) per 100g: 697kJ/ 167kcal



Nutritional Information Tables

How to create a nutritional table

If you are planning to include a nutritional information table on your packaging, you can find out the values in a number of different ways. Before you start, you need to ensure you have an accurate recipe for your product including exact amounts of each ingredient and a finalised method that you use for every production run. This will ensure that your information remains accurate for the consumer. You will also need to know the percentage of individual products in compound ingredients for inclusion for these calculations.

Trading Standards are realistic that many smaller companies have limited resource to undertake nutritional analysis of products and will accept nutritional tables based on calculations. For larger companies, there is often a combination of calculation and testing of products to show correlation between theoretical values from calculation and actual analysis. Large companies will always base their tables on analysis rather than theoretical calculations.

There are resources to assist with calculations:

Online: there are numerous commercial sites that offer free trials and/or additions such as costings per portion e.g. Nutricalc & A la Calc

Local food college: sometimes nutritional information tables are completed as part of student projects or courses and it may be worth exploring whether your meals could form part of a student study.

For analysis Commercial Food Testing Labs can be costly, but a good source of advice and can guarantee that your values are correct as they will usually be calculated using recipe, method, accepted industry standard information and conducted with a sample of your own products.

McCance and Widdowson's publication 'The Compositions of Foods Integrated Dataset continues as a reliable source of nutritional data.

References and further reading

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/eat-well/how-to-read-food-labels/> [accessed 13.10.2021]

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/nutrition-labelling#presentation-of-nutrition-information>

<https://youtu.be/tL8SeX-euko> [accessed 13.10.21]

<https://www.bda.uk.com/resource/food-labelling-nutrition-information.html> [Accessed 13.10.21]

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/nutrition-labelling> [Accessed 13.10.21]

<https://www.businesscompanion.info/en/quick-guides/food-and-drink/labelling-of-prepacked-foods-nutrition-declaration>

<https://www.alacalc.co.uk/>

<https://www.foodstandards.gov.scot/business-and-industry/safety-and-regulation/labelling/nutrition-labelling-requirements>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/composition-of-foods-integrated-dataset-cofid> provides further information.

<https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/nutritionlabellinginformationleaflet.pdf>

https://www.food.gov.uk/sites/default/files/media/document/fop-guidance_o.pdf

<https://www.food.gov.uk/business-guidance/nutrition-labelling>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/composition-of-foods-integrated-dataset-cofid> provides further information.

Important to know!

Although the UK has left the European Union, certain pieces of legislation (formally known as 'retained EU law') will still apply until such time as they are replaced by new UK legislation. This means that you will still see references to EU regulations in many guidance sources around food packaging requirements and should check back regularly to keep up to date with any changes. There may also be variations to this information in Scotland, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

