

FOOD LABELLING

Food labelling provides consumers with information to make safe and nutritious food choices. Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) sets the standards for what information **must** be on food labels, and how voluntary information on the nutritional quality of food is included. This information is set out in the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code.

Mandatory information

Food labels must contain the following information:

- name and/or a description of the food
- 'lot' number for traceability
- date mark - use by or best before
- country of origin of the food
- directions for use and storage (some foods)
- name and Australian street address of the supplier of food
- list of ingredients
- nutrition information panel
- warning and advisory statements and declarations (e.g. for allergens).

Nutrition and health claims

Nutrition and health claims can be voluntarily added by the food business.

Nutrition content claims = claims about the content of certain nutrients or substances in a food e.g. low in fat, good source of calcium. These claims need to meet certain criteria. For example, food with a 'good source of calcium' claim needs to contain at least the amount of calcium specified in the Food Standards Code. Foods do not need to meet a minimal level of healthiness to contain nutrition content claims.

Health claims = relationship between a food and its health benefits. There are two types of health claims:

- general level e.g. fibre helps keep you regular
- high level e.g. diets high in calcium may reduce the risk of osteoporosis in people 65 years of age and over.

The Food Standards Code includes more than 200 pre-approved food-health relationships for **low level** health claims. There are currently 13 pre-approved food-health relationships for **high level** health claims. Health claims are only permitted on foods that meet the Nutrient Profiling Scoring Criterion.

Health Star Rating

The Health Star Rating (HSR) can be voluntarily added, which is a system that rates the overall nutritional profile of a packaged food. The rating is from ½ to 5 stars (the higher the better) and is based on foods within the same category e.g. don't compare muesli bar and bread. Consumers can use the HSR as a food selection guide. Step 1: Identify whether food is a core food in the Australian Guide to Healthy Eating. Step 2: Select a packaged food with the highest rating in that category. Work is underway to determine whether the HSR should be made mandatory.