

# Know your labels

## Nutrition and health claims

### What is a nutrition claim?

Nutrition claims on packaging tell you about what a product does (or does not) contain, or what it contains in a higher or lower amount. This includes important nutrients such as fat, sugar, fibre, vitamins and minerals. Here are some examples:

- **Source of calcium** – Must contain at least 15% of the Reference Intake (RI) for calcium per 100g.
- **Low sugar** – Product contains no more than 5g of sugars per 100g for solids, or 2.5g of sugars per 100ml for liquids.
- **High in protein** – At least 20% of the energy value of the food is provided by protein.
- **Reduced fat** – Contains at least 30% less fat compared to a similar product.



As you can see above, nutrition claims are only permitted on products that meet certain criteria, which are set out within EU regulations. If you would like to know more, you can find the [full list of nutrition claims](#) on the European Commission website.

### What is a health claim?

These are claims about how a product could benefit your health. Products must meet certain conditions to be able to use a health claim. For example, to make a health claim about calcium a product must contain at least 15% of the daily Reference Intake (RI). Here are a few examples of health claims you may see on labels:



- **Iron** contributes to normal oxygen transport in the body.
- **Plant sterols/stanols** contribute to the maintenance of normal blood cholesterol levels.
- **Vitamin D** is needed for the normal growth and development of bone in children.
- **Vitamin C** contributes to the reduction of tiredness and fatigue.

Health claims on food labels are not allowed to state that the food or drink can prevent, treat or cure any disease or medical condition, or make reference to a specific rate or amount of weight loss.

### Can I trust health claims on labels?

Health claims on foods, drinks and supplements must abide by European regulations, which means that if you see a claim on a product, it should have been authorised for use. The **European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)** is the body responsible for evaluating health claims for use in the European Union (EU), which decides whether there is good enough scientific evidence for a claim to be authorised.



This process ensures that claims made on products are scientifically based and not misleading for consumers. You can find out [more information about health claims on the EFSA website](#).

From **1st January 2021**, the UK Nutrition and Health Claims Committee (UKNCC) will advise the UK government on the scientific evidence behind new nutrition and health claims that are proposed for use in England, Scotland and Wales (Great Britain).

### Who decides the wording of health claims?

The authorised wording of health claims is decided by the regulators, but companies can change this to make it clearer for consumers, as long as they don't exaggerate or change the meaning. However, we don't know much about people's understanding of the health claims on foods and drinks.

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