

EATRIGHTBOSTON

Newsletter

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Do Processed Meats Need a Food Warning?



In December 2016, the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) filed a nine-page petition that suggests the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Safety and Inspection Service begin requiring colorectal cancer warning labels on certain meat and poultry products.

This is in part due to the fact that the World Health

Organization unit, known as the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), added processed meat to its cancer list in October 2015.

CSPI is asking that the USDA requires all meat and poultry products that "are preserved by smoking, curing, salting, and/or the addition of chemical preservatives" to bear the warning label.

Examples of these foods include bacon, hot dogs, ham, sausages and deli and luncheon meats.

The CSPI suggests the label should state:

"USDA WARNING: Frequent consumption of processed meat products may increase your risk of developing cancer of the colon and rectum. To protect your health, limit consumption of such products."

The group also wants a similar warning on processed poultry products.

As you can imagine, there will be pushback from the meat industry on this petition!

The New Nutrition Facts Label

Here's an update on the new Nutrition Facts label since I wrote about it in the Summer 2016 newsletter. While some manufacturers are already making changes on their labels, they have until July 26, 2018 to comply with the final requirements, and manufacturers (with less than \$10 million in annual food sales) will have an additional year to make the changes. This also applies to foods imported to the United States.

It's been over 20 years since the Nutrition Facts label has been changed. The revised label (mock up below) is based on updated scientific information, new nutrition and public health research, more recent dietary recommendations from expert groups, and input from the public.

during the processing of foods. They include sugars (free, mono- and disaccharides-like table sugar or brown sugar), sugars from syrups and honey, and sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices that are in excess of what would be expected from the same volume of 100% fruit or vegetable juice of the same type. The definition excludes fruit or vegetable juice concentrated from 100% fruit juice that is sold to consumers (e.g. frozen 100% fruit juice concentrate), as well as some sugars found in fruit and vegetable juices, jellies, jams, preserves, and fruit spreads.

Nutrients that are required on the label are Vitamin D, calcium, iron and potassium. Vitamin D and calcium are important for their role in bone health, iron is essential to blood cell reproduction, and potassium can help to lower blood pressure.

NEW LABEL / WHAT'S DIFFERENT

Servings: larger, bolder type

New: added sugars

Change in nutrients required

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

Serving sizes updated

Calories: larger type

Updated daily values

Actual amounts declared

New footnote

Changes include:

- Emboldening Calories and Serving Size.
- Emboldening and increasing the font size of “Calories.”
- Addition of “Includes Xg Added Sugars” directly beneath the listing for “Total Sugars” (under total carbohydrates).
- Actual amounts of nutrients are declared, as well as the % Daily Value, which is still based on 2000 calories a day.
- There is now a footnote that addresses % Daily Value. Rather than just telling you what it is, it will now read: “The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.”

The changes include modifying the list of required nutrients that must be declared on the label, updating serving size requirements, and providing a refreshed design. The new Nutrition Facts label will make it easier for consumers to make informed decisions about the food they eat.

The discussion of added sugars has always been confusing to consumers and will get addressed in the new label. They are now recognized as sugars that are *physically added*

I'm still not a fan of % daily values. They are very misleading if you are not following a 2000 calorie meal program. I prefer to use the actual amounts of the nutrients. I am thrilled that potassium and iron have been added. So much easier for people with kidney disease to know how much potassium is in a food. Vitamin D is still a bit of a mystery as it is listed in micrograms and not International Units that commonly appear on vitamin bottles.

Menus Will Post Calories, Too!

In addition to the changes to the Nutrition Facts label on foods purchased in a grocery store, there are also new menu labeling requirements for restaurants starting on May 5, 2017.

According to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), calorie information will now be required on menus and menu boards in all “restaurants and similar retail food establishments if they are part of a chain of 20 or more locations, doing business under the same name, offering for sale substantially the same menu items and offering for sale restaurant-type foods.” While some places are already doing this, it is not consistent from state to state.

Statistically, Americans eat and drink about 33% of calories away from home, so the nationwide rule will make it easier for consumers to know

how many calories they are eating, so they can make an informed decision and choose their menu items wisely.

The FDA also requires restaurants to include a statement on menus and menu boards reminding consumers that, “2000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice, but calorie needs vary.” This is different for children. For them, they will include the statement, “1200 to 1400 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice for children ages 4 to 8 years; and 1400 to 2000 calories a day for children ages 9 to 13 years, but calorie needs vary.”

According to the FDA’s *Food Facts 2016* publication, the following (charts) will help consumers better understand what establishments the new law applies to.

Nutrition Information Will Be On:

Meals or snacks from sit-down and fast-food restaurants, bakeries, coffee shops, and ice cream stores

Foods purchased at drive-through windows

Take-out and delivery foods, such as pizza

Foods, such as sandwiches, ordered from a menu or menu board at a grocery/convenience store or delicatessen

Foods that you serve yourself from a salad or hot-food bar at a restaurant or grocery store

Foods, such as popcorn, purchased at a movie theater or amusement park

Alcoholic drinks, such as cocktails, when they are listed on menus

Nutrition Information Won't Be On:

Foods sold at deli counters and typically intended for more than one person

Foods purchased in bulk in grocery stores, such as loaves of bread from the bakery section

Bottles of liquor displayed behind a bar

Food in transportation vehicles, such as food trucks, airplanes, and trains

Food on menus in elementary, middle, and high schools that are part of U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National School Lunch Program (although vending machines in these locations are covered)

Vending Machine Labeling Laws

As a kid, I remember stopping at a highway pit stop on our way back from Detroit to grab a bite to eat. Our selections were limited to foods circulated by the press of a button in a vending machine. Back then, vending machines were the only source of food on major highways that I could remember. How times have changed! While fast foods places are 24/7, vending machines still continue to service an industry where prepared foods are not accessible, such as late shift, factory workers.

Vending machines have new labeling rules, too! The rules define “vending machine” to mean “a self-service machine that, upon insertion of a coin, paper currency, token, card, or key, or by optional manual operation, dispenses servings of food in bulk or in packages, or prepared by the machine, without the necessity of replenishing the machine between each vending operation.”

Vending machine operators who own or operate 20 or more vending machines have to clearly post calories for certain foods (e.g. soft drinks, packaged snacks, hot-and-cold cup beverages, refrigerated prepared food and handfuls of nuts or candies, such as those sold from bulk vending machines). Specifically, they have to comply with strict stipulations to ensure visibility of calorie information at the point of purchase (e.g., through front-of-pack calorie labeling).

They also have the option to post calorie declarations on a sign (or sticker) close to the food or the food selection button. The sign does not necessarily need to be attached to the vending machine as long as the calorie declaration is visible at the same time as the food- its name, price, selection button, or selection number must be visible. The sign must provide calorie declarations for articles of food that are sold from that particular vending machine. The final rule also permits electronic or digital displays of the calorie information.

Not that I plan on hitting the vending machines soon, but it’s good to know that better choices can be made with the twirl of the carousel!



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