Nutrition Labelling and Claims in Singapore - An Update (2012)

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“Food” includes drink, chewing gum and other products of a like nature and use, and articles and substances used as ingredients in the preparation of food or drink or of such products, but does not include —

(a) live animals or birds;
(b) fodder or feeding stuffs for animals, birds or fish; or
(c) articles or substances used only as drugs.

EXAMPLES OF FOOD

✓ Honey
✓ Coffee
✓ Spirulina/Chlorella tablets
✓ Whey protein powder
Food (Amendment) Regulations 2011

- Date of gazettal: 15 April 2011
- Changes broadly classified into:
  - New additives and extension of use of existing additives
  - Revised limits for contaminants
  - Revised import declaration
  - New and revised food standards
  - New and revised requirements for labelling of food
Introduction (cont’d)

New additives and extension of use of existing additives

- Anti-caking agents
- Solvents for flavouring agents
- Colouring matter
- Emulsifier/Stabilisers
- Nutrient supplements
- General purpose food additives
- Preservatives
- Sweetening agents

Revised limits for contaminants

- Cadmium in mushrooms and cocoa/cocoa products
### Particulars to appear on import permit:
- “UNBRANDED” will not be allowed anymore
- To declare:
  - brand name of product, or if there is no brand name at time of import, to declare:
    - name of manufacturer of the product; or
    - intended brand name of the product

### New and revised food standards
- Regulation 38 - Irradiated food
- Regulation 40A - Whole grain
- Regulations 61 & 73 - Storage temperature for frozen meat and fish lowered to -18°C, from the current -15°C
- Regulation 183A - Natural mineral water
- Regulation 250A - Foods containing phytosterols, phytosterol esters, phytostanols, or phytostanol esters
- Regulation 251 & 252 - Infant food / Infant formula
- Regulation 260 - Rice
• Net quantity of the food
• Mandatory declaration of the foods and ingredients known to cause hypersensitivity
• Use of Generic Terms for ingredients declaration
• Permitted health claims and criteria for their use
• Permitted health claim for food products allowed to contain plant sterols/stanols or their esters
• Recommended daily allowance (RDA) for Calcium
• “Nutrition claim” [to include claims made on vitamins and minerals]
• Claims on vitamins and minerals - “an excellent source of”
• Date-marking required for “ready-to-eat minimally processed fruits and vegetables (such as cut fruit and vegetables)”

New and revised requirements for labelling of food
Food (Amendment) Regulations 2012

• Date of Gazettal: 02 May 2012
• Trans fat requirements on edible fats and oils
  – Trans fatty acid content should not exceed 2% (w/w)
  – Declaration of trans fatty acid content under nutrition information panel for prepacked edible fats and oils
New Labelling Requirements

- Drained weight declaration
- Foods known to cause hypersensitivity to individuals (allergen declaration)
- Wholegrain
- Infants’ food and formula (for infants aged 0 to 12 months of age)
Drained weight declaration

- Liquid medium refers to water, aqueous solutions of sugar and salt, fruit and vegetable juices in canned fruits and vegetables only, or vinegar, either singly or in combination.

**Required**
- Liquid medium is drained away prior to consumption.
- Preserved/pickled product in brine, vinegar, where liquid medium is neither drained nor consumed.
- Canned fruit & vegetable packed in juices or sugar syrups.

**Not Required**
- Products for drinking which contains solid bits.
- Solid food in gravy, paste or sauce, which are meant to be consumed as a dish.
- Solid food predominantly in oil.
- Solid food with small amount of water due to syneresis.
Foods known to cause hypersensitivity to individuals

- Cereals containing gluten (for example, wheat, rye, barley, oats, spelt or their hybridised strains and their products);
- crustacean (for example shrimp, crab, lobster) and crustacean products;
- eggs and egg products;
- fish and fish products;
- peanuts, soybeans and their products;
- milk and milk products (including lactose);
- tree nuts (for example, cashew nuts, macadamia nuts, pecan nuts, brazil nuts, pistachio nuts) and nut products; and
- sulphites in concentrates of 10mg/kg or more
Foods known to cause hypersensitivity to individuals

**Declaration using statement of ingredients**

- List all ingredients under the statement of ingredients
- Declare source of ingredient/additive

**Declaration using “Contains” statement**

- Use of generic terms e.g. “vegetable oil”
- Source of ingredient not disclosed in statement of ingredients
- Should not be used to declare additional food ingredients/additives which are not declared in the statement of ingredients.
Definition:
- intact grain or the dehulled, ground, milled, cracked or flaked grain where the constituents (endosperm, germ and bran) are present in such proportions that represent the typical ratio of those constituents occurring in the whole cereal, and includes wholemeal.

Conditions:
- the food product falls within or is made from ingredients falling within the definition of “wholegrain”; and
- the word “wholegrain” (or other words conveying that meaning) is qualified immediately by words indicating the percentage of wholegrain ingredients used.
Infants’ food

• Food described or sold as suitable for infants and shall include infant formula

• Infants’ food other than infant formula shall be foods intended for feeding infants as complementary food from over age of 6 months

• No label or advertisement to say the infant food is meant for infants below 6 months of age

• In line with the recommendation by the World Health Organisation for exclusive breastfeeding of babies for the first 6 months, with the introduction of complementary foods and continued breastfeeding thereafter
New Labelling Requirements (cont’d)

Infant formula

• Increase in addition of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nutrient</th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vitamin D</td>
<td>40 I.U. to 80 I.U.</td>
<td>40 I.U. to 100 I.U.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selenium</td>
<td>3 mcg</td>
<td>1 mcg to 5 mcg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nucleotides</td>
<td>≤ 5 mg</td>
<td>≤ 16 mg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

• Allow addition of
  – Galacto-oligosaccharides, long chain inulin and oligofructose produced from inulin, in an amount not exceeding a total level of 0.8 g per 100 ml.
Update on Nutrition Labelling and Health Claims

- Nutrition Labelling
- Nutrition Claims
- Nutrient Function Claims
- Other Function Claims
- New Approved Claims
- Nutrient Specific Diet-related Health Claims
Nutrition labelling

**Before**

**Nutrition claim definition:**
- energy;
- salt, sodium or potassium;
- amino acids
- fats, cholesterol, fatty acids
- carbohydrates
- starch or sugars
- fibre
- protein
- any other nutrients

**Special purpose foods**
- Low-calorie/Energy food
- Diabetic food
- Low sodium food
- Gluten-free food
- Infant formula food

**Now**

**Nutrition claim definition also includes:**
- vitamins or minerals

**Edible Fats and Oils**
- Trans fat

**Special purpose food include:**
- Food containing added phytosterols, phytosterol esters, phytostanols or phytostanol esters
### Nutrition Information Panel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Servings per package (here insert number of servings)*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serving size: (here insert the serving size)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Per Serving* or</th>
<th>Per 100 g (or 100 ml)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>kcal, kJ or both</td>
<td>kcal, kJ or both</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protein</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carbohydrate</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Here insert the nutrients for which nutrition claims are made, or any other nutrients to be declared)**

|                        | g               | g                      |

* Applicable only if the nutrients are declared on a per serving basis.

**Amounts of sodium, potassium and cholesterol are to be declared in mg.
Nutrition claims

• Any representation which states, suggests or implies that a food has particular nutritive properties including energy value, salt (potassium/sodium), carbohydrates, cholesterol, fats, protein, vitamins/minerals

• Includes nutrient content claims and nutrient comparative claims

• Product should meet the requirements of the Regulations or the nutrient claims guidelines published in “A Handbook on Nutrition Labelling” by the Health Promotion Board
### Before

#### Claim on presence:
1/6 of RDA in per reference quantity of food

#### Claim on source of:
50% of RDA in per reference quantity of food

### Now

#### Claim on presence / source of:
1/6 of RDA in per reference quantity of food

#### Claim on **excellent source of**:
50% of RDA in per reference quantity of food
Nutrition claims (vitamins and minerals)

- Increase in the daily allowance for calcium

500mg → 800mg

50% of 800mg in per reference quantity (i.e. 400mg per 200ml milk)

Excellent source of calcium
Guidelines on nutrition claims that are not specified under the Food Regulations may be found in the Handbook on Nutrition labelling (Singapore) established by the Health Promotion Board, Singapore.
Nutrient function claims

- Describe physiological role of nutrient in growth, development and normal functions of body
- No application is required if they are the permitted ones listed under the AVA website
- Meet the requirements/guidelines for the respective nutrition claims
- Specific to nutrient, not food product
Other function claims

- Specific beneficial effects of consumption of foods or their constituents, in context of total diet on normal functions or biological activities of body, relating to positive contribution to health or to improvement of a function or to modify or preserve health

- Used in exact approved form

- Currently allowed:
  - Collagen
  - Probiotics
  - Prebiotics
  - Foods added with phytosterols, phytosterol esters, phytostanols or phytostanol esters (plant sterols)
Update on Nutrition Labelling and Health Claims (cont’d)

Foods containing phytosterols, phytosterol esters, phytostanols or phytostanol esters

- Regulation 250A
  - milk containing no more than 3 g total fat per 100 g, or 1.5 g total fat per 100 ml;
  - yoghurt containing no more than 3 g total fat per 100 g
  - fat spread

- Changes to Regulations 9 and 91A

- Advisory statements
  - Targeted group of consumers
  - Recommended daily intake
  - Amount of plant sterols present in per serving
New approved claims

“Prebiotic blend (Galacto-oligosaccharides and long chain Fructo-oligosaccharide), zinc, and iron support the child’s natural defences.”

- Infant food and foods for young children (up to 6 years of age)
- The combination of galacto-oligosaccharides and Long chain fructo-oligosaccharide present in the product must be in the ratio of 9:1.

“Nucleotides support body’s natural defences”

- Infant formula for infants less than 1 year of age
- The total nucleotides content must be within the range of 72mg/L to 115mg/L.
Nutrient specific diet-related health claims

• Relating the consumption of a food or food constituent, in the context of the total diet, to the reduced risk of developing a disease or health-related condition.

• Changes to Regulation 9

• Meet criteria under Fourteenth Schedule of Food Regulations

• Approved by the HPB to carry the Healthier Choice Symbol
“A healthy diet with adequate calcium and vitamin D, with regular exercise, helps to achieve strong bones and may reduce the risk of osteoporosis. (Name of food) is a good source of/high in/enriched in/fortified with calcium.”

“A healthy diet low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a risk factor for stroke and heart disease. (Name of food) is sodium free/low in/very low in/ reduced in sodium.”

“A healthy diet low in saturated fat and trans fat, may reduce the risk of heart disease. (Name of food) is free of/low in saturated fats, trans fats.”

“A healthy diet rich in whole grains, fruits and vegetables that contain dietary fibre, may reduce the risk of heart disease. (Name of food) is low/free of fat and high in dietary fibre.”

“A healthy diet rich in fibre containing foods such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some types of cancers. (Name of food) is free/low in fat and high in dietary fibre.”
Application for New Claims

- Application form from the AVA “Food Labelling and Advertisement” website
- Identify the nutrient/food constituent/food or food category
- Proposed wording of the health claims
- Published independent peer-reviewed reports of human intervention studies
- Official statements by recognised expert scientific bodies and food authorities of major developed countries
- Indication of the information which should be regarded as proprietary
- Summary of application
- Evaluated by Advisory Committee on Evaluation of Health Claims
Future Work

• Monitor international development in the relevant Codex meetings, on food and nutrition labelling requirements, especially on the evaluation of the scientific evidence for use of claims

• Continuous improvement on guidelines provided to industry members to encourage compliance
References

• **Food Regulations**
  – Go to Homepage at [www.ava.gov.sg](http://www.ava.gov.sg) → Mouse over “Legislation” then click on “List of Legislation” → Under the title “Sale of Food Act (Chapter 283)” → Click on “Food Regulations”

• **Guide to Food Labelling and Advertisement**
  – Go to Homepage at [www.ava.gov.sg](http://www.ava.gov.sg) → Click on “Food Labelling & Advertisements” → Under “Statutory requirement” → Click on “A Guide to Food Labelling and Advertisements”

• **Handbook on Nutrition Labelling**
Thank you