

FRONT OF PACK LABELLING – HEALTH STAR RATING SYSTEM

The Health Star Rating (HSR) system is a labelling system which provides clear nutrition information on the front of packaged food to assist consumers to make informed food purchases and healthier eating choices.

Timeframes for implementation

The HSR system is a national voluntary front of pack labelling system for packaged foods. Manufacturers have five years to implement the system on their products – to June 2019 with a review of the progress of industry implementation after two years – June 2016, where voluntary uptake of the system will then be measured.

How does the system work

The labelling system complements the current Nutrition Information Panel (NIP) by providing interpretive information on the front of packaged products. It also displays a star rating with ½ star increments, to indicate which foods are better nutritional choices – the more stars displayed, the healthier the food.

It does this by using an algorithm to award a star based rating on the quantity of energy (kilojoules), saturated fat, total sugars, sodium, protein, dietary fibre, fruit, vegetables, nuts and legumes. Calcium is also applicable for some products. See below example graphic.



Manufacturers will determine the HSR by entering the food nutrient and ingredient values in a spreadsheet calculator, known as the HSR calculator.

What food is covered by the system

All packaged, manufactured or processed foods presented ready for sale to the customer in the retail sector (except for agreed exemptions). These include:

- Bread and bakery
- Biscuits
- Breakfast cereals
- Canned and preserved food, including soup
- Chilled processed food
- Confectionery and snack bars
- Dairy beverages
- Beverages
- Cheese
- Dried processed food
- Frozen processed food
- Ice cream
- Oils, spreads and fats
- Pasta and noodles
- Ready meals
- Sauces, dressings and condiments

- Spreads
- Sweet and savoury snacks

As a guide, if a food product carries a NIP, then generally the use of the HSR system should be considered.

Importers of packaged food products into Australia are encouraged to adopt the provisions of the HSR system style guide on their food products.

What food is exempt from the system

Some packaged foods are exempt from NIP labelling under *Standard 1.2.8 – Nutrition Information Requirements* of the Food Standards Code (the Code), and in general, the HSR system is not appropriate for use in relation to these foods. These include foods with inherently low nutritional contribution such as: **herbs, spices, vinegar, salt, pepper, tea, coffee, herbal infusions, gelatine and setting compounds.**

Standard 1.2.1, Clause 2, of the Code – Application of Labelling and Other Information Requirements also exempts certain 'Fresh value-added products' from NIP labelling such as: **packaged fruit, vegetables, meat, poultry, fish, pre-packaged rolls and sandwiches.**

Other foods that don't need to display the HSR include certain special purpose foods such as **infant formula products, formulated supplementary sports foods, foods for special medical purposes, alcoholic beverages (>1.5% alcohol by volume), alcohol kits and kava.**

About the NSW Food Authority: The NSW Food Authority is the government organisation that helps ensure NSW food is safe and correctly labelled. It works with consumers, industry and other government organisations to minimise food poisoning by providing information about and regulating the safe production, storage, transport, promotion and preparation of food.

Note: This information is a general summary and cannot cover all situations. Food businesses are required to comply with all of the provisions of the Food Standards Code and the *Food Act 2003* (NSW).

Available resources

The following resources are available to the manufacturing industry to guide implementation of the system on their products:

- *Health Star Rating System Style Guide* – outlines how to display the graphics on packaging.
- *Guide to Industry for the HSRC* – outlines the six steps required to determine a HSR score and assign a rating to a food.
- *Instructions for using the HSR calculator* – outlines how to use the calculator.
- *Health Star Rating Calculator* – spreadsheet containing the algorithm needed to calculate the rating.

The resources are available on our website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au/industry/labelling/front-of-pack-labelling

More information

- visit the Food Authority's website at www.foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
- phone the helpline on 1300 552 406
- visit the Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) website at www.foodstandards.gov.au



Department of
Primary Industries
Food Authority

6 Avenue of the Americas, Newington NSW 2127
PO Box 6682, Silverwater NSW 1811
T 1300 552 406
contact@foodauthority.nsw.gov.au
ABN 47 080 404 416

More resources at foodauthority.nsw.gov.au



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