

# Major aspects of nutrition labeling regulations essay sample

[Nutrition](#)



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Food labeling has come a long way. It's surprising but it wasn't until 1990 that the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act required all packaged foods to include nutritional information. Required categories of nutritional labeling regulations include the ingredients list, serving size, nutrition facts, and daily value standards of nutrients. Additionally, if the product wishes to make claims about nutrients and healthfulness, they must substantiate them in some way. Nutritional information for non-packaged food like produce or fresh meats is often found on a nearby sign or in a brochure. (<http://www.fda.gov/aboutfda/whatwedo/history/milestones/ucm128305.htm>, <http://www.fda.gov/ICECI/Inspections/InspectionGuides/ucm074948.htm>, & p. 53)

All ingredients must be listed in descending order by weight but the percentage of those ingredients are not required. For example, a product that lists three ingredients contains more of the first ingredient than the second and more of the first and second than the third but there's no way to tell how much of each is contained within. Additives must also be listed. (p. 53)

Within the serving size section, the FDA-established serving size, in both metric and imperial scales for that particular food, must be included as well as the number of servings in the package. This allows for product comparison since you can compare nutritional information across different brands, products, and formulas. Strangely, the serving sizes on food labels is not always consistent with USDA Food Guide serving sizes. (p. 54)

The Nutrition Facts section includes, in grams and percentages of Daily Value, the information about calories, calories from fat, total fat, saturated and trans fats, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates (which includes starches, sugar, and fiber), breakdown of dietary fiber and sugars, and protein, in that order. Additionally, this section needs to include the percentage of Daily Value of Vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium. (p. 55)

A separate section also needs to display a reminder of the Daily Values of total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, and fiber for a daily intake of 2000-kCalories, the number suggested for sedentary young women, active older women, and sedentary older men. Some labels also include the information for a 2500-kCalorie diet, which is the daily intake recommended for many men, teenage boys, and active young women. Some labels include a reminder of how many calories fat, carbohydrates, and protein contain per gram. The percentage Daily Value listed in the Nutrition Facts only applies to the 2000-kCalorie diet. (pp. 55-56)

A brand may make Nutrient Claims and include some verbiage as “rich in calcium” or “low sodium” if it meets the FDA definition of those claims. (p. 57)

If a brand wishes to promote the inclusion of (or lack of) certain nutrients, vitamins, etc. in the product, they may use unqualified Grade A phrases in which there is significant scientific agreement (ie. “diets adequate in folate may reduce a woman’s risk of having a child with neural tube defect”) or qualified Grade B, C, or D statements that reference the supportive, limited or very small amount of evidence supporting it. (pp. 57-58)

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The unfortunate loophole to health claims are structure-function claims which can be the most confusing to consumers as it's hard to differentiate. Structure-function claims describe a relationship between the existence of a particular nutrient in the product and benefit such as “ builds strong bones” without having to show proof – as long as it doesn't mention a disease. (p. 58)