

Food labelling

Background notes for course leader

Nutrition labels on foods can help you choose between products and brands, to make healthier choices. These labels usually include information on energy (calories), protein, carbohydrate and fat. They may provide additional information on saturated fat, sugars, sodium, salt and fibre. All nutrition information is provided per 100 grams and sometimes per portion of the food. To compare the nutritional content of foods, it is easier to compare per 100g.

Most pre-packed food products also have a list of ingredients on the packaging or on an attached label. The ingredients list can also help you work out how healthy the product is.

Ingredients are listed in order of weight, so the main ingredients in the packaged food always come first. That means that if the first few ingredients are high-fat ingredients, such as cream, butter or oil, then the food in question is a high-fat food.

How to choose a healthier option:

Some foods will have a traffic light system on the front

- Red indicates the unhealthy choice
- Amber means the food is okay
- Green indicates a healthier choice

Nutrient	High (per 100g)	Low (per 100g)
Fat	20g	Less than 3g
Saturated Fat	5g	Less than 1.5g
Sugar	More than 15g	Less than 5g
Salt	1.5g (or 0.6g Sodium)	Less than 0.3g (or 0.1g Sodium)

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Look for the following information on food labels to make healthy choices:

Snacks: Less than 3g fat per serving
 Less than 8g sugar per serving

Breakfast cereals: Less than 5g fat per 100g
 Less than 10g sugar per 100g

Ready meals:
portion Less than 10g fat per portion
 Less than 350 calories kcal per

Pre-packed sandwiches: Less than 6g fat per pack
 Less than 280 calories kcal per pack

Food labelling

Session 1: Food and labelling

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the session the group should:

- Be aware of food labelling
- Know the “traffic light system”
- Know how to make healthy choices by looking at labels with traffic light system
- Be aware that supermarkets could use different labelling
- Have taken part in physical activity

Activities and resources:

Activity	Preparation	• Resources
Which foods are good for us	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• You may want to revisit the key messages in fat, sugar, salt and fibre to hold further discussion around the questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• None required
Labels on foods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Familiarise yourself with food labels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Packets from foods with labels• Make sure you have some with the traffic light system on them
The traffic light system	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Familiarise yourself with the presentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Power-Point presentation “The traffic light system”• Lap top and projector
Put labels with red, orange and green traffic lights	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Print off or photocopy in colour the traffic light pictures• Collect food labels where traffic light system is mainly red, orange and green	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Traffic light pictures (page 284-286)• Labels of foods that the pie chart is mainly red, labels that the pie chart is mainly orange, labels that the pie chart is mainly green.

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Activity	Preparation	Resources
Different supermarkets different labels	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collect food labels where there is no traffic light system shown• It might be helpful to arrange a supermarket visit to look at labels. This can be worked into this session if you have time or as a separate session.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Food packets with labels from different supermarkets
Physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Check the risk assessment sheets to make sure that groups can do the exercise that is suggested• View the “Keeping fit and active” DVD to familiarise yourself with the content and suggested exercise. Or plan out a walk to do with the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Keeping Fit and Active” DVD, NHS Greater Glasgow• “You can do it” DVD (SCLD) or download it from http://vimeo.com/21292481

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Session 1: food and labelling

Which foods are good for us?

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- Review previous learning

We are going to go through some questions. You should put your thumbs up if you think the food is good for you. You should put your thumbs down if you think the food is bad for us. (Demonstrate thumbs up and thumbs down)

Ask the following questions:

- Are foods that are high in fat good for us?
 - No, thumbs down
- Are foods that are low in fat good for us?
 - Yes, thumbs up
- Are foods that are high in salt good for us?
 - No, thumbs down
- Are foods that are low in salt good for us?
 - Yes, thumbs up
- Are foods that are high in sugar good for us?
 - No, thumbs down
- Are foods that are low in sugar good for us?
 - Yes, thumbs up
- Are foods that are high in fibre good for us?
 - Yes, thumbs up
- Are foods that are low in fibre good for us?
 - No, thumbs down

Encourage each learner to show thumbs up, thumbs down.

Food labelling

Labels on foods

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- Be aware of food labelling

The foods that we buy should say if it is:

- high or low in fat
- high or low in sugar
- high or low in salt

You can see this information on the label of the food pack. Show some food packets and either:

- talk through what label tells you about fat, sugar and salt, or
- hand packs out and ask the learners to tell you about the fat, sugar and salt in the food item they have

Ask the group:

Do you check the food pack for this information?

Try to get an answer from each group member if possible.

The traffic light system

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- Be aware of food labelling
- Know the “traffic light system”
- Be aware that supermarkets could use different labelling
- Have taken part in physical activity

Ask the group:

Have you seen the green, red, orange colour on the label of foods?

Show the group a pack of food that uses the traffic light system when you ask this question.

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Show the traffic light presentation explaining the following points:

- Where there is lots of green on the traffic light label this is a healthy food choice
- Where there is lots of orange on the traffic light label this is somewhere in the middle of healthy and unhealthy
- Where you see lots of red on the traffic light label this is an unhealthy food choice
- Some supermarkets use a pie chart system; some show the traffic lights in a horizontal line. They all have slightly different ways of showing it
- Some supermarkets and brands do not show it at all
- Be aware that the traffic light labels do not always describe the whole item of food, for example the garlic bread wrapper in the presentation describes one quarter of the garlic bread, the soup wrapper describes half a can and the chips wrapper describes 1/5 of the pack.

Put labels with red, orange and green traffic lights

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- Be aware of food labelling
- Know the “traffic light system”
- Know how to make healthy choices by looking at labels with traffic light system

Take the 3 traffic light pictures, red, orange and green and lay them out on a table (page 284-286).

Suggestions for food packets with labels from different supermarkets:

- Tin Fruit Salad in syrup + Tin fruit salad in juice
- Crisps + apple crisps
- Bran/low sugar cereal e.g. puffed wheat + High sugar cereal e.g. honey nut cornflakes
- Fruit Yogurt + chocolate Yogurt
- Cereal bar + chocolate bar
- Crisps + apple/vegetable crisps
- Ryvita thins
- Rice cakes
- Walkers baked
- Dried fruit e.g. apricots + choc biscuits/bar

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Foods that are healthy but may not have labels

- Bread
- Fruit

Give each learner a food label with the traffic light system. Ask them in turn to:

- Look at the traffic light on the label
- Decide which colour there is the most of (red, orange or green)
- Decide which traffic light they should put it with (e.g. labels containing mostly red go with the red traffic light)

You can involve the larger group if individuals need some help to work it out.

Explain to the group that the aim is to eat as many meals which are mainly green on the traffic lights as these are the healthiest. In one week for our main meal of the day we should be aiming to eat 4 green meals, 2 amber meals and 1 red meal as a treat.

Different supermarkets - different labels

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- Be aware of food labelling
- Know the “traffic light system”
- Be aware that supermarkets could use different labelling

Some supermarkets do not use the traffic light system. Show the group packets of foods from supermarkets that do not use the traffic light system.

Ask the group:

Which labelling do you prefer?

Why do you prefer it?

You may decide to arrange a supermarket visit to look at labels, this can be done either as part of this session or separately.

Physical Activity

The purpose of this exercise is to:

- Have taken part in physical activity

Encourage the group do some exercise. You could:

- Go for a walk
- Follow the exercises suggested in the “Keeping Fit and Active” DVD (NHS Greater Glasgow)
- Do some simple exercises recommended by a registered physiotherapist

Suggestion:

Why not ask the group what they would like to do for next time? If you have time you could watch the “You can do it” DVD (SCLD) to get some ideas.

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