

The New Food Label at a Glance

Descriptors: While descriptive terms like "low," "good source," and "free" have long been used on food labels, their meaning — and their usefulness in helping consumers plan a healthy diet — have been murky. Now FDA has set specific definitions for these terms, assuring shoppers that they can believe what they read on the package:

•free	•high
•light	•low
•more	•reduced
•good source	•less

For fish, meat and poultry:
 •lean
 •extra lean

Ingredients still will be listed in descending order by weight, and now the list will be required on almost all foods, even standardized ones like mayonnaise and bread.

Health claim message referred to on the front panel is shown here.

FROZEN MIXED VEGETABLES — IN SAUCE —



"While many factors affect heart disease, diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of this disease."

Source: Food and Drug Administration 1992

Health Claims: For the first time, food labels will be allowed to carry information about the link between certain nutrients and specific diseases. For such a "health claim" to be made on a package, the Food and Drug Administration must first determine that the diet-disease link is supported by scientific evidence. At this time, FDA is allowing seven specific claims about the relationships between:

- fat and cancer risk
- saturated fat and cholesterol and heart disease risk
- calcium and osteoporosis risk
- sodium and hypertension risk
- fruits, vegetables and grains that contain soluble fiber and heart disease risk
- fiber-containing grain products, fruits and vegetables and cancer risk
- fruits and vegetables and cancer risk