



January 6, 1993

Mandatory Nutrition Labeling -- Final Rule

One of a Series of FDA Regulations Implementing The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990

Brief Summary: FDA is amending its regulations to require nutrition labeling for most foods offered for sale and regulated by FDA. The nutrition label is required to include information on total calories and calories from fat and on amounts of total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron -- in that order. Manufacturers also may voluntarily declare information on calories from saturated fat and on amounts of polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat, soluble and insoluble fiber, sugar alcohol, other carbohydrate, potassium, additional vitamins and minerals for which Reference Daily Intakes (RDIs) have been established, and the percent of vitamin A present as beta-carotene. The information presented on the label is to represent the packaged product prior to consumer preparation.

This final rule establishes a standard format for nutrition information on food labels consisting of: (1) the quantitative amount per serving of each nutrient except vitamins and minerals; (2) the amount of each nutrient as a percent of the Daily Value for a 2,000 calorie diet; (3) a footnote with reference values for selected nutrients based on 2,000 calorie and 2,500 calorie diets; and (4) caloric conversion information.

The declaration of percent of Daily Value must be placed in column order. Absolute declarations of the amount per serving of designated nutrients must appear immediately following the nutrient named and not in column order. A simplified format may be used if seven or more of 13 required nutrients are present in only insignificant amounts.

Foods exempt from mandatory nutrition labeling requirements include: (1) food offered for sale by small businesses; (2) food sold in restaurants or other establishments in which food is served for immediate human consumption; (3) foods similar to restaurant foods that are ready to eat but are not for immediate consumption, are primarily prepared on site, and are not offered for sale outside of that location; (4) foods that contain insignificant amounts of all nutrients subject to this rule, e.g., coffee and tea; (5) dietary supplements, except those in conventional food form; (6) infant formula; (7) medical foods; (8) custom-processed fish or game meats; (9) foods shipped in bulk form; and (10) donated foods. Otherwise-exempted foods that make a nutrient content claim or health claim forfeit the exemption.

Special labeling provisions specify that: (1) foods in small packages having less than 12 square inches available for labeling may omit nutrition labeling if an address or telephone number that a consumer may use to obtain required nutrition information is provided on the label; (2) packages of 40 or fewer square inches may present the required information in tabular or linear fashion if the package shape cannot accommodate columns, use specified abbreviations, omit the footnote and caloric conversion information, and present the required nutrition information on any label panel; (3) foods for children less than two years of age must not declare information concerning calories from fat, fatty acids and cholesterol; (4) foods for children less than four years of age must not include Daily Value information; (5) raw fruits, vegetables, and fish should follow voluntary nutrition labeling guidelines; (6) packaged single-ingredient fish or game meat may provide information on an "as prepared" basis; (7) foods sold from bulk containers and game meat products may provide