



Canadian Restaurant and Foodservices Association

Nutrition Information for Foods Sold in Restaurants and Foodservice Establishments

A User's Guide to Implementing the
CRFA Voluntary Guidelines for Providing
Nutrition Information to Consumers

CRFA
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CRFA'S VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING NUTRITION INFORMATION TO CONSUMERS



The Nutrition and Fitness Roundtable of CRFA has developed voluntary guidelines on making nutrition information available to consumers in restaurants and other foodservice establishments. With the growing consumer interest in obtaining nutrition information about foods and beverages sold in the restaurant and foodservice sector, these guidelines will help you to provide nutrition information about menu items in a set manner and make it easier for your consumers to find the information on a consistent basis.

MINIMUM GUIDELINES

CRFA has established the following minimum standards for providing nutrition information to consumers:

- Nutrient values will be provided for core or standard menu items self-selected by chains depending on the complexity of the menu.
- Nutrient values will be as consistent as possible with the core nutrition label information required for packaged goods and will include:

Calories
Fat
Saturated Fat
Trans Fat
Cholesterol
Sodium
Carbohydrate
Fibre
Sugars
Protein
Vitamin A • Vitamin C
Calcium • Iron

- This information will be made available to restaurant consumers through in-store brochures, pamphlets or posters, which will be consistently and readily available to customers at each unit location.
- The *availability* of the nutrition brochures or pamphlets will be prominently displayed on menus, menu boards and vehicles such as take-out and home delivery packaging.
- The nutrition information will also be made available on participating company websites and the online availability of the information will be prominently identified on menus, menu boards and vehicles such as take-out and home delivery packaging.
- It should be noted that these are minimum standards and companies may wish to exceed these guidelines.
- Companies are also encouraged to use the same pamphlets or brochures to provide allergen information for standard or core menu items, including the top 10 allergens: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, soy, wheat and other gluten, sesame seeds and sulphite.
- Alternatively, allergen information will be available through toll-free numbers and on company websites.

The following steps and regulatory considerations will help you to implement the CRFA guidelines.

A USER'S GUIDE TO IMPLEMENTING CRFA'S VOLUNTARY GUIDELINES FOR PROVIDING NUTRITION INFORMATION TO CONSUMERS

This "how to" guide has been designed as a quick reference document to help you implement CRFA's guidelines on making nutrition information available to consumers. The purpose of this guide is to outline a step-by-step approach to determining nutrient values of menu items and some general "dos" and "don'ts" if you wish to make nutrient content claims.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

CRFA's voluntary guidelines have been developed to be consistent with the regulations on mandatory nutrition labelling of prepackaged foods. However, this "how to" guide to help implement the guidelines does not provide all the technical details of the regulations. You can find more details on the regulations and related guidance in two key government documents – the *Food and Drugs Regulations (FDR)* and *2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising (GFLA)*. Where relevant and for more information, this user's guide also provides reference numbers from the government regulations and/or labelling guide and web links to the appropriate sections.

When accessing these web links, it is important to note that the government regulations and guidance refer to the mandatory requirements for providing nutrition information on the labels and/or in advertising of prepackaged foods. In contrast, CRFA's guidelines are voluntary and describe how to make nutrition information for menu items available in pamphlets and other communication materials. The guidelines do not require the placement of nutrition information on menus, menu boards or other ways in which your menu offerings are displayed.

STEPS IN DETERMINING NUTRIENT VALUES

There are two methods for determining nutrient values of foods and beverages – by calculation from data on food and ingredient composition or by chemical analysis of the end product. The calculation method provides predicted values, whereas laboratory analysis provides values from direct measurement. A key factor in choosing a method is the desired level of accuracy, which is related to how you plan to use the numbers. For example, laboratory analysis is almost always needed to substantiate nutrient content claims whether for mandatory nutrition labelling of prepackaged foods or voluntarily providing nutrition information on menu items.

Both methods involve very specialized work by professionals in the fields of nutrient calculations and analytical chemistry. Recognizing the complexity in determining nutrient values and the dearth of expertise and resources, Health Canada is also developing a guidance document for generating nutrient values that is expected in early 2007. You should periodically check the *Nutrition Labelling Regulatory Section* from Health Canada for status updates and availability of the final document.

More information on these methods is provided in the following step-by-step approach:





STEP 1 – Select the menu items for which nutrition information will be provided

Determining nutrient values of foods is a complex process with several factors contributing to variance in the values. For restaurant foods in particular, sources of variation are typical to preparing menu items – from the chef's creation of the day to the availability of fresh ingredients. In order to reduce additional variation, standardized foods and beverages with portion controls that appear on your menu regularly should therefore form a core of menu items for which nutrient values will be provided.

STEP 2 – Collect all required menu item information

Once you have selected your menu items, it is necessary to obtain recipe, ingredient and serving size information for each item. All of the information identified in the following checklist is required to determine nutrient values by calculation, whereas primarily the serving size information (to convert the nutrient values as analyzed to amounts per the food as served) is required for laboratory analysis.

- ☆ Recipes – including yields, the processing or cooking methods that you use and as much detail as possible on all the ingredients in the recipe.
- ☆ Ingredient supplier specification sheets ("spec sheets") providing analytical results for the nutrients of the CRFA guidelines – calories, total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, fibre, sugar and protein. (The regulations require suppliers to provide this information, as well as information about vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron.)
- ☆ Food amounts per serving of the menu items – in standard serving size measures such as cups of stew or pasta or stated as individual foods such as burritos, egg rolls, hamburgers or slices of pizza, as well as the corresponding metric measures for weight or volume in grams (g) or millilitres (mL), respectively.



STEP 3 – Select the method to use for determining nutrient values

You can determine nutrient values for menu items by calculation, laboratory analysis or a combination of both methods. The following descriptions of the two methods can help you choose the method that is best suited to meet your needs. Web links to additional information and a table comparing the two methods are also provided to assist with your decision.

3a) Determining nutrient values by calculation

- The calculation of nutrient values of foods is generally carried out by internal or external experts in the field of nutrient composition and database management.
- Once you have the nutrient composition of all of the ingredients in a menu item, nutrient values per serving of the item are calculated using the amount of an ingredient used in a recipe and dividing by the number of servings the recipe yields.
- A reliable source of ingredient nutrient content information is from supplier specification sheets specific to the ingredient as purchased and used. This specificity is critical because, for example, the nutrient composition of an ingredient can differ between retail and foodservice SKUs.
- Another source of information is from *ECCnet*, a standards based product registry maintained on a not for profit basis by the *Electronic Commerce Council of Canada*. As an initiative undertaken by food service distributor members of the *Canadian Council of Grocery Distributors*, *ECCnet* is a national electronic product registry containing nutrition and other product information provided by manufacturers on approximately 30,000 to 40,000 foodservice products. Of the loaded foodservice items, approximately 95% of these products are foods and the database is nearing completion for standard product data. Operators can get access to the data through a participating distributor or on a limited basis through the *Electronic Commerce Council of Canada*.
- You can also find food and some ingredient nutrient values in food composition databases such as the *Canadian Nutrient File Downloads* and the U.S. *USDA Nutrient Database for Standard Reference*. However, these databases are best suited to obtaining average nutrient values of foods as described in the database that generally represent similar products sold in the marketplace, but are not representative of a specific product or brand because of underlying variation from product to product. The Canadian database is also difficult to use because the entire database must be downloaded and the tables must be linked in order to see the data. In contrast, the U.S. database is easier to use; however, the nutrient composition of several items is different between the United States and Canada. For example, Canadian data should be used for meat cuts due to different grading systems and for many fortified foods such as ready-to-eat cereals and soups due to different food fortification regulations.
- Accounting for processing and cooking effects on nutrient composition is also critical in determining nutrient values by calculation. For example, moisture losses from cooking can be measured by weighing the food before and after cooking. Knowledge of other sources of variability on nutrient composition such as seasonal effects would also be useful.



3b) Determining nutrient values by laboratory analysis

- When well performed, laboratory analysis is generally considered the "gold standard" for determining nutrient values of foods.
- This method for determining nutrient values should be carried out by certified analytical laboratories that use acceptable methods of analysis such as the *Official Methods of Analysis of AOAC International* or other collaboratively established methods.
- Canadian or U.S. laboratories can perform the analyses because the procedures are internationally standardized.
- The number of samples of the same menu item to be analyzed would depend on the desired accuracy and can be determined with input from the laboratory doing the analysis.
- Actual food samples of the menu item as served are shipped to the laboratory, which should also advise on shipping needs (e.g., freezing) and other potential effects on nutrient levels in the food sample.

3c) A comparison of selected attributes of the calculation and laboratory analysis methods for determining nutrient values

	Calculation	Analysis
Application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Predicted nutrient values from food and ingredient composition data • Used for nutrition labelling and recipe and menu items • Internal personnel or reputable services should provide some analytical verification of the calculated values if the data are to be used for nutrient claims 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct nutrient values from a representative sample(s) of the menu item • Used to substantiate nutrient content claims and other uses that come under the purview of the regulations
Exceptions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans fatty acid content cannot accurately be determined by calculation; however, reputable services are working on refining and verifying calculations 	None
Approximate Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$50-\$150 per recipe for calories and the 13 nutrients required for mandatory nutrition labelling • Resource intensive to maintain and manage an ingredient database internally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$700-\$1200 per sample for calories and the 13 nutrients required for mandatory nutrition labelling • Expect somewhat lower cost for fewer nutrients • Discount for multiple samples
Some Recommended Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally limited • Info Access (1988) Inc. www.infoaccess.ca • Guelph Food Technology Centre (combination of database and chemistry) www.gftc.ca • Nutripro www.nutripro.ca 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many are available • Maxxam Analytics Inc. www.maxxam.ca • Silliker Canada Co. www.silliker.com/canada • University of Guelph Laboratory Services www.uoguelph.ca/labserv



STEP 4 – Be informed of regulations related to the statement of nutrient values

Although the regulations on mandatory nutrition labelling of prepackaged foods generally do not apply to menu items served in restaurants, some of the regulations deal with how nutrient values are stated and you should consider the regulations when providing nutrient values for menu items. This context will help you to implement the CRFA voluntary guidelines in a manner consistent with provision of the core nutrition label information required on prepackaged foods. An overview of the regulations would also be helpful if you decide to make nutrient content claims or advertise and undertake other activities that trigger the regulations to apply. To help with these information

needs, the relevant sections of the regulations and guidance in the *Food and Drugs Regulations (FDR)* and *2003 Guide to Food Labelling and Advertising (GFLA)* are outlined below.

4a) Nomenclature and units [FDR B.01.301, B.01.401 & B.01.402] [GFLA 6.1]

The nutrition labelling regulations specify the nomenclature and units of measurement for calories and nutrients declared on the label of prepackaged foods and these same specifications must be used when listing the nutrient values of your menu items. The following table outlines the nomenclature and units for calories and nine of the nutrients of the CRFA voluntary guidelines. A complete list of core nutrients as used in nutrition labelling is available at GFLA 6.1.1 Table 6-1.

Energy or Nutrient	Nomenclature	Unit per Serving
Energy value	Calories Total Calories Calories, Total	Calories
Amount of fat	Fat Total Fat Fat, Total	Grams (g)
Amount of saturated fatty acids	Saturated Fat Saturated Fatty Acids Saturated Saturates	Grams (g)
Amount of trans fatty acids	Trans Fat Trans Fatty Acids Trans	Grams (g)
Amount of cholesterol	Cholesterol	Milligrams (mg)
Amount of sodium	Sodium	Milligrams (mg)
Amount of carbohydrate	Carbohydrate Total Carbohydrate Carbohydrate, Total	Grams (g)
Amount of fibre	Fibre Fiber Dietary Fibre Dietary Fiber	Grams (g)
Amount of sugars	Sugars	Grams (g)
Amount of protein	Protein	Grams (g)



**4b) Rounding rules [FDR B.01.401 & B.01.402]
[GFLA 6.1]**

The nutrition labelling regulations also include rounding rules for declaring nutrient values on the nutrition panel of prepackaged foods. Rounding rules are necessary because the amount by which a nutrient value is rounded impacts the accuracy of the value, and in turn, compliance and enforcement decisions based on allowable tolerances (*see Step 4d*). Rounding rules vary across nutrients, as well as within a nutrient depending on the content of the nutrient in a food.

Here's an example for rounding the amount of saturated fat in a food:

Food Contains	Round To
Less than 0.5 g saturated fat and is "saturated fat free" (contains less than 0.2g saturated fat and less than 0.2 g trans fat)	0
Less than 0.5 g saturated fat and is not "saturated fat free"	Nearest 0.1 g
0.5 to 5 g saturated fat	Nearest 0.5 g
5 g or more of saturated fat	Nearest 1 g

You can use rounding rules as a general guideline when stating nutrient values for menu items in restaurants. A complete list of the rounding rules as used in nutrition labelling of core nutrients is available at *GFLA 6.1.1 Table 6-1*.

4c) Serving sizes [FDR B.01.022A] [GFLA 6.2.2]

The nutrient values determined for menu items must be based on a specific amount of food as served. For nutrition labelling, except for fractions of an entire food or single serving containers (both of which would not generally be applicable to menu items), you can express serving sizes in commonly used units such as cups, tablespoons, pieces or units (e.g., muffin, hamburger). The metric serving size for volume (mL) or weight (g) must also accompany the common unit in brackets following the common unit. For consistency, it would be ideal to express serving sizes of menu items in restaurants in the same manner and according to the amount that is usually served to consumers.



4d) Accuracy and tolerances [GFLA 6.11]

The accuracy of nutrient values is important to relay the correct product nutrition information to consumers, as well as serve as the basis for government enforcement actions of the applicable regulations. Although not part of a specific regulation, the accuracy of nutrient values is addressed in a comprehensive *Nutrition Labelling Compliance Test*, which outlines the government approach to assessing nutrient accuracy and compliance with the regulations. The general tolerance range is 80 to 120 percent, whereby "negative" nutrients such as fat cannot be found above 20 percent of the declared value and "positive" nutrients such as vitamin and minerals cannot be found at less than 20 percent of the declared value. However, the application of tolerances is not as simple as measuring plus or minus 20 percent because the rounding rules must also be applied (see *Step 4b*). A useful reference from the government compliance document is *Appendix 3 Table 3*, which shows the impact of applying tolerances to the minimum and maximum limits prior to rounding. Food manufacturers are not required to use the government compliance test and you may choose a risk management strategy for developing accurate nutrient data that is best suited to your foods and uses of the nutrition information.

STEP 5 – Decide on making nutrient content claims

Nutrient content claims are statements or expressions that describe the level of a nutrient in a food as a means of highlighting a nutrition feature of the food, for example, "source of energy," "fat-free" or "high fibre."

5a) Nutrient content claims in restaurants [FDR B.01.503, B.01.505-507 & Table] [GFLA 7.1 & 7.12]

Although the regulations on mandatory nutrition labelling of prepackaged foods generally do not apply to menu items served in restaurants, nutrient content claims are permitted and may be found in various promotional or advertising materials such as menus, menu boards, table tents and posters.

5b) Nutrient content claim general requirements [B.01.503, B.01.505-507 & Table]

If you decide to make nutrient content claims, the entire mandatory nutrition labelling regulations do not apply. For example, you do not require a "Nutrition Facts" panel on menu items; however, the nutrient content claim regulations do apply, as would be the case when nutrient content claims are made whether foods are sold at retail, to the trade or in restaurants and other foodservice establishments. Generally, the applicable energy or nutrient value per serving of a stated size must be identified in your advertising material and must be placed adjacent to the claim and in the same print size.



5c) Nutrient content claim serving size [FDR B.01.022A] [GFLA 6.2.2] and reference amount [FDR B.01.001] [GFLA 6.2.1] requirements

In order to make a nutrient content claim, a menu item must also qualify for the nutrient content claim criteria based on both serving size and reference amount, as well as other conditions as listed in the regulations for the claim you are making.

Depending on the serving size of the menu item according to the amount that is usually served to consumers (see 4c), adjustments to the amount of food served might be required in order for the food to qualify for a nutrient content claim based on serving size.

A complete list of serving size ranges as used in nutrition labelling is available at *GFLA 6.2.2 Table 6-3* and would be useful as a guide to how serving sizes might need to be adjusted.

A reference amount is a specific regulated quantity of a food usually eaten at one sitting. Reference amounts have been established by Health Canada and form the basis of the compositional criteria for nutrient content claims and health claims in the labelling and advertising of prepackaged foods. For example, if a food bears a content claim such as "good source of" or "low in" a certain nutrient, the food must contain a specified amount of that nutrient in the reference amount of the food, as well as in the serving size of the food. If a food has a reference amount of less than or equal to 30 g or 30 mL, the specified amount of the nutrient must also be contained in 50 g or 50 mL of the food. A complete list of reference amounts as used in nutrition labelling is available at *FDR Schedule M*.

The following table outlines the regulatory requirements for some selected nutrient content claims. You can find a complete list of the nutrient content claims and their specific requirements and conditions for use at *FDR B.01.513 Table of Nutrient Content Claims*.

Claim	Condition(s) for the Food	Supporting Information
Source of energy	Food provides at least 100 Calories (or 420 kJ) per serving of stated size and per reference amount	Calories per serving of stated size
Free of fat	Food contains less than 0.5 g of fat per serving of stated size and per reference amount	Fat (g) per serving of stated size
Low in fat	Food contains 3 g or less of fat per serving of stated size and per reference amount	Fat (g) per serving of stated size
Free of trans fatty acids	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Food contains less than 0.2 g trans fatty acids per serving of stated size and per reference amount Food contains 2 g or less of saturated fatty acids and trans fatty acids combined per serving of stated size and per reference amount Food provides 15% or less energy from the sum of saturated fatty acids and trans fatty acids 	Trans fatty acids (g) per serving of stated size
Source of fibre	<p>Food contains 2 g or more of fibre* per serving of stated size and per reference amount</p> <p><i>* If the fibre source is identified, then the food must contain at least 2 g of the identified fibre source (e.g., oat bran)</i></p>	Fibre (g) per serving of stated size

In the same way that nutrient content claims for menu items are subject to the regulations on nutrient content claims, it is reasonable to expect that such claims would be subject to enforcement and compliance. Considerations of accuracy and tolerances and the other regulations addressed previously (*in Step 4 and Step 5*) thus become important. It is generally recommended to determine nutrient values by laboratory analysis and/or have sound verification of calculated values if you use the values for making nutrient content claims.

5d) A special case regarding carbohydrate claims [GFLA 7.23]

With consumer interest in low carbohydrate dieting, both the retail and restaurant and foodservice sectors have wanted to respond to consumer demand by providing carbohydrate information and claims on foods and beverages. However, with the onset of mandatory nutrition labelling, the area of carbohydrate claims has undergone a great deal of revision compared with the carbohydrate claims that were previously allowed. Under the new rules, carbohydrate content can be declared as "0 g carbohydrates" while declarations such as "contains 0 g carbohydrates" and content claims such as "low carbohydrate" are no longer permitted. Terms such as "net carbohydrate" and "effective carbohydrate" are also not allowed. If you are interested in providing carbohydrate information on your menu items, additional details are available from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) in their special bulletin, the *CFIA Carbohydrate Claims Information Letter*.





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