# Nutrition information fact sheet

# Food labels for families

# Why do we have food labels?

Food labels help us to make healthy and safe food choices for our children and families. But there can be a lot of information and it's easy to get confused!



### What's on a food label?

#### **Nutrition Information Panel**

You can use this to compare foods to help you choose which one to buy. In general, choose foods with lower numbers for fat, sugar and salt.



#### **Ingredients List**

These are listed from the largest amount to the smallest amount. Foods with fats, sugars or salt in the first few ingredients can be less healthy choices.

#### **Nutrition Claims**

A Nutrition Claim is when a food packet uses words like "low fat", "no added sugar", "no added salt" or "high fibre". These foods have to meet guidelines set by Food Standards Australia New Zealand (FSANZ). Choosing foods with less fat, sugar and salt and more fibre will often mean a healthier food choice. You can use the numbers on the Nutrition Information Panel to double check.

#### **Food Additives**

Food additives are listed in the ingredients list and include things like colours and preservatives. Food additives used in Australia have to be judged to make sure they are safe. This is done by FSANZ.

#### **Allergy Warnings**

The ingredients that people can be allergic to must be stated on the food label. This information can be found in the ingredient listing of a food label. A separate warning can also be made, eg. 'Contains wheat and soy'.

#### Use By Date

The use by date shows the last day that food is still safe to eat. Foods should be thrown out after their use by date.





# Food labels for families

#### **Best Before Date**

It is best to eat food before this date but you can still eat food after this date as long as it's not damaged. It just might have lost some of the quality.

## Country of Origin

Country of Origin labelling tells us the country or countries where food was grown, made or packaged.



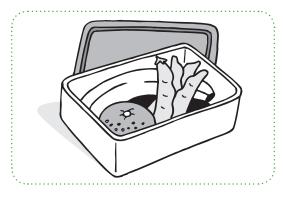
But remember... healthy food doesn't have to come with a label!



## Many foods like fresh fruit and vegetables have no packaging

Fresh fruit and vegetables have many benefits such as:

- > lots of vitamins and minerals
- > no additives or preservatives
- > they often come in their own packet like bananas and oranges - perfect for lunchboxes!



- > they are often cheaper because you don't pay for the packet
- > they are better for the environment.

Food labels can help us to make better food choices, but fresh foods with no labels can also be healthy and better for the environment!

#### For more information

Children, Youth and Women's Health Service www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/az/other/nutrition/index.html www.cyh.com

**Food Standards Australia New Zealand** Phone (02) 6271 2222 www.foodstandards.gov.au

© Department of Health, Government of South Australia All rights reserved. Printed August 2009.

