

NUTRI-SCORE FAQ

WHAT IS NUTRI-SCORE?

Nutri-Score is a front-of-pack nutritional label which converts the nutritional value of food and beverages into a simple overall score. It is based on a scale of five colours and letters (A is green to represent the best nutritional quality while E is dark orange to show it is the lowest).



Why do we need Nutri-Score?

Currently nutritional information is given back-of-pack, mostly in the form of a table in a small font. For consumers, it is time-consuming and often complicated to compare the nutritional quality of different food products.

Making healthier choices is important given the current situation in the EU with one third of children and half of adults being overweight or obese. Excess weight increases a person's risk to develop nutrition-related chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer. Also, we know that consumers generally eat too much salt, sugars and saturated fat and not enough dietary fibre, fruit and vegetables compared to healthy eating recommendations.

Food labelling is only one part of the solution to tackling unhealthy eating habits. It is increasingly recognised that supporting consumers in adopting healthier diets requires a broad set of interventions to address the 'food environment'.

How is Nutri-Score calculated?

Nutri-Score is calculated taking into account both the nutrients to limit (calories, saturated fat, sugars and salt) and those elements to favour (protein, dietary fibre, fruits, vegetables, pulses, nuts, and rapeseed, walnut and olive oils). Most elements for the calculation can be found in the compulsory EU nutritional labelling table on the back of the pack. The food is assigned a colour and letter based on the resulting score, calculated per 100g or 100ml.



Why is Nutri-Score the best front-of-pack nutrition label?

A simplified front of pack nutrition label is helpful for consumers. Compared to other labels Nutri-Score has the following advantages:

- **It is the easiest label to understand.** Evidence from research conducted in several countries shows Nutri-Score currently is the best-performing scheme in aiding consumers to compare the nutritional value of foods across a range of products.
- **It makes consumers' shopping baskets healthier.** Research has shown that it is the label that works best in making consumers' food choices healthier – including for low-income households, who are most at risk of becoming overweight or obese. Also, it helps consumers eat smaller portions.
- **It uses colour-coding.** Research shows colour-coding greatly helps consumers to compare the nutritional quality of food and beverages.
- **It uses positive and negative aspects in its calculations.** This results in a summary score based on nutrients that have a positive impact (such as fibre) and on nutrients that have a negative impact (like sugar and salt).
- **It is based on uniform reference amounts such as per 100g/100ml.** Only then, it is possible to compare products with different portion sizes.
- **It has been developed based on solid, independent and transparent scientific evidence,** and is free from commercial interests.
- **It incentivises food makers to improve their recipes** - although not its main purpose. To achieve a better score, manufacturers must improve the nutritional quality of their products.

What are the most challenged aspects of Nutri-Score?

Some myths about Nutri-Score have been spreading confusion, so we've put the facts straight in this [myth buster](#). In short, we demonstrate that:

- **Nutri-Score focuses on nutrients like sugar, salt and fats.** Not additives or cooking methods.
- **Nutri-Score simply 'translates' the complicated back-of-pack nutritional information into a single score.** It has nothing to do with praising or demonising foods.
- **Nutri-Score is fully in line with the traditional Mediterranean diet,** which is high in fruit, nuts, vegetable, legumes and cereals.
- **To compare between foods, a uniform reference amount of 100g/ml is the only option.** Not portion sizes.
- **Nutri-Score aims to compare options for a given meal.** That's why it is irrelevant to compare diet Coke (Nutri-Score 'B') to olive oil ('C'), as no one would use diet Coke to prepare a salad dressing.



Finally, we conclude that there is room for improving Nutri-Score based on scientific and public health considerations, but not for commercial interests. Therefore, it is positive that an [independent scientific committee](#) has been established to review Nutri-Score, taking into account the latest scientific findings.

What about consumers?

Consumers like Nutri-Score. Surveys from [France and Belgium, where Nutri-Score has been used for a few years already](#), indicate that consumers benefit from seeing the label on food packages. **94%** of French consumers are in **favour** of Nutri-Score on food packages and **89%** want it to become **mandatory**.

Who has developed Nutri-Score?

Nutri-Score has been developed by independent scientists. A group of French researchers have built on the nutrient profiling system developed by the UK Food Standards Agency.

Which countries have endorsed it?

Seven European countries have endorsed Nutri-Score: France, Belgium, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and Luxembourg. [The countries are to step up the roll out of the label.](#) They have also established a scientific committee with scientists from the participating countries to consider potential adaptations of the label.

Who supports Nutri-Score?

[Academics, public health organisations and consumer organisations](#) have thrown their weight behind Nutri-Score. The [WHO's cancer body \(IARC\)](#) calls for a 'widespread and systemic adoption in Europe'. Also, over the past years an increasing number of food companies, retailers and food service players have lent support to Nutri-Score. Many remain reluctant to use it, however, despite its usefulness for consumers.



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