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GAIN Report
Global Agricultural Information Network

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Mexico's New Front-of-Pack Labeling Regulations

Report Categories:
Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards - Certification

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Report Highlights:
On April 15, 2014 the Federal Commission for the Protection against Sanitary Risks (COFEPRIS) announced new guidelines for the labeling of processed packaged foods in the Diario Oficial (Federal Registrar), making it mandatory to include a front-of-pack nutrition label (FOP) with nutritional information on sugar, sodium, fats, and caloric content per portion. COFEPRIS also issued another set of guidelines limiting TV advertising of unhealthy products. Junk food can no longer be advertised between 2:30pm and 7:30pm. These guidelines are intended to prevent further increases in childhood obesity and obesity-related problems. Mexico ranks number one in the prevalence of childhood obesity.

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General Information:
On April 15, 2014, the Federal Commission for the Protection against Sanitary Risks (COFEPRIS) announced in the Diario Oficial (Federal Registrar) new guidelines for the labeling of processed packaged foods, making it mandatory to include a front-of-pack label with nutritional information about sugar, sodium, fats, and caloric content per portion. COFEPRIS also issued another set of guidelines limiting TV advertising of unhealthy products. Junk food can no longer be advertised from 2:30pm to 7:30pm. These guidelines are intended to prevent further increases in childhood obesity and obesity-related problems. Mexico is ranked number one in the prevalence of childhood obesity: Mexican boys have an obesity rate of 28.1 percent and Mexican girls have a 29 percent obesity rate.

Mexican President Peña Nieto has established a 2013-2018 National Development Plan (Plan), which describes goals for five sectors of interest (peace, inclusion, quality of education, prosperity, and global responsibility). According to the Plan, obesity rates have increased in all population groups, leading to the creation of these guidelines.

The guidelines include changes to nutritional information labels requiring that caloric content be featured on the front of the product. Products that meet accepted calorie criteria will be able to obtain an elective seal.

The New Guidelines

The guidelines published by COFEPRIS aim to feature nutritional and advertising criteria for food and non-alcoholic beverages, when advertised in open or restricted television as well as in movie theaters. Their main purpose is that through this new information consumer can make better choices when purchasing a product. Meeting the guidelines is mandatory for manufacturers of processed and packaged foods and companies that advertise food and non-alcoholic beverages (as determined by Article 2, fraction II of the General Health Law).

There are 12 product categories affected by these guidelines:

1. Oils of animal, vegetable, and fat origin
2. Vegetables, fruits, grains, nuts, seeds, and tuber products (except those processed for snacks)
3. Meat-based products
4. Fishery products
5. Dairy products
6. Cereal and tuber based products
7. Soups, ready-to-eat dishes, main dishes, filled sandwiches, seasonings, and condiments
8. Desserts
9. Flavored beverages
10. Snacks
11. Confectionery products
12. Chocolates and chocolate-like products

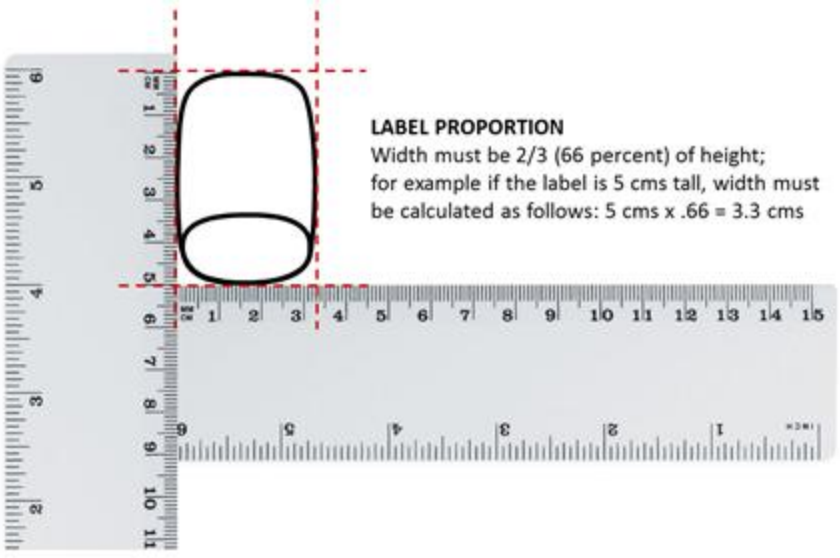
The new front-of-pack labeling system requires four figures on the labels of products that highlight amounts of key nutrients and what they represent in a recommended daily diet. The nutritional information must be included on the front of the package making it eligible and visible

General Criteria to Include the Information on the Front of the Label

The mandatory declarations which must be expressed on the label need to be in the following icon:

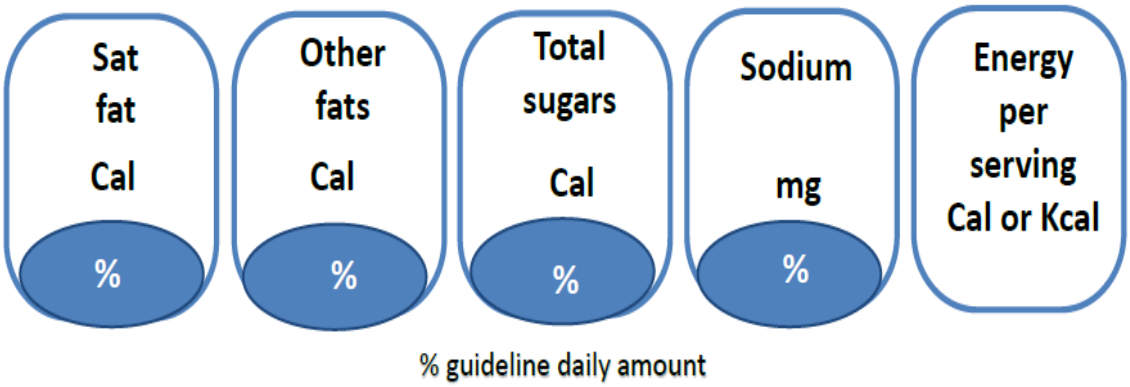


The minimum dimensions will be regulated according to the size of the front exhibition area with mandatory declarations occupying at least 0.5 percent of the label. The icon can never be smaller than 0.6 cm wide and 0.9 cm tall. In all cases, every icon's width must be 2/3 (66 percent) of its height.

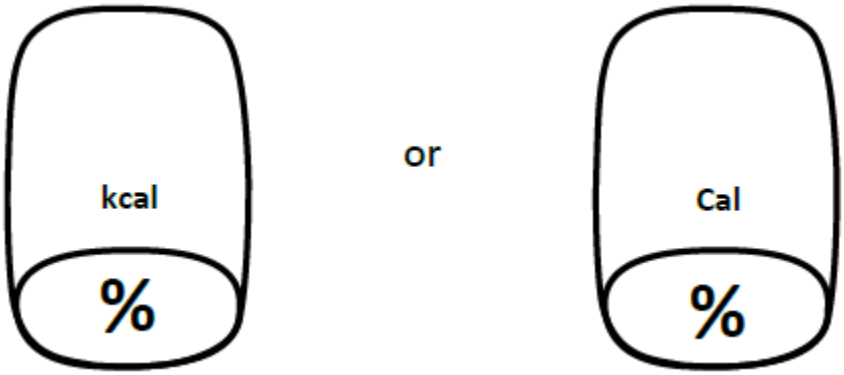


The declaration of nutrients and caloric content must be done in order, exhibiting nutritional contents in a particular sequence. The placement of icons must start on left and continue to the right as follows (labels shown below in Spanish and in English as a reference, however, all labels **must be in Spanish**):

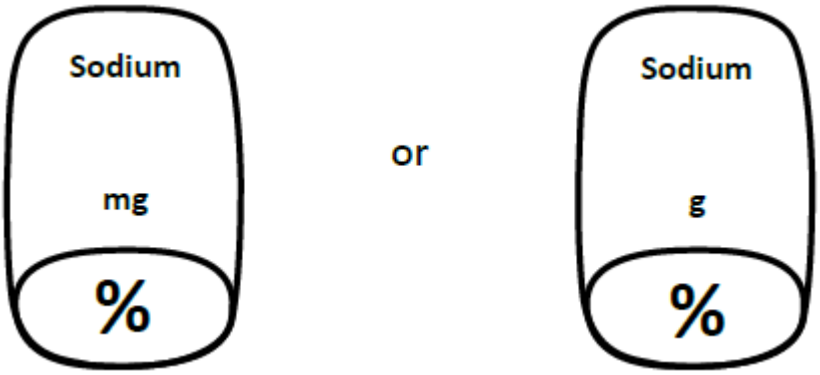
1-Fat content 2-Other fats 3-Sugars 4-Sodium 5-Enery content (calories)



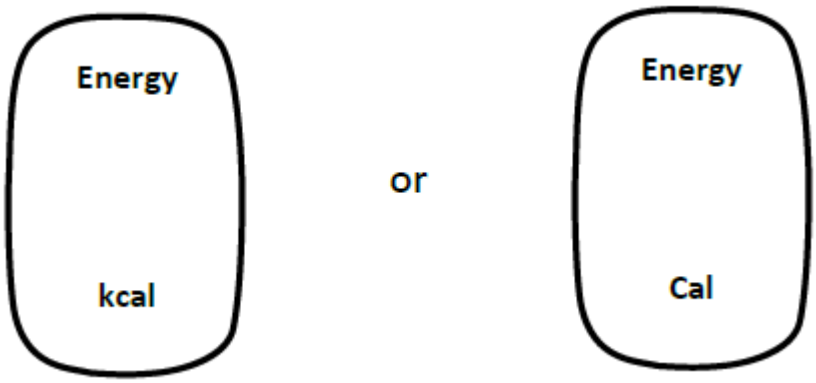
The percent of calories and saturated fat, other fats, and total sugars must be expressed in kilocalories or calories using the abbreviation “kcal” or “Cal” and report the percentage of recommended daily intake using the percentage sign “%” as shown below:



The sodium content needs to be expressed in milligrams using the abbreviation “mg” or “g” when content exceeds more than a thousand milligrams, and report the percentage using the percent sign “%”as shown below:

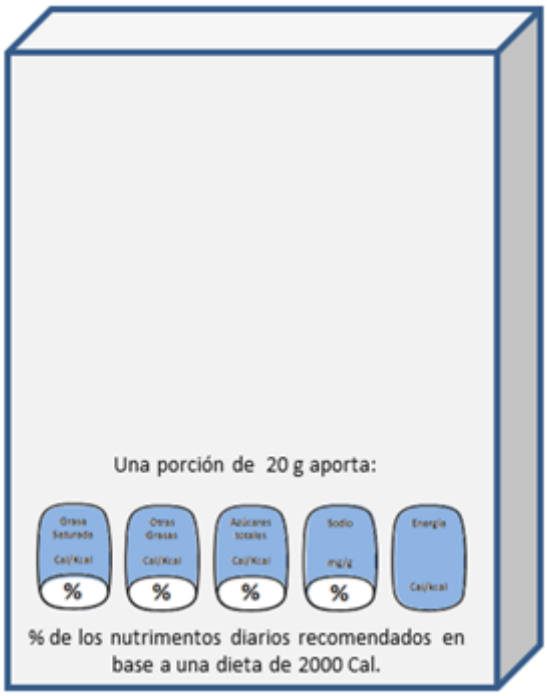


To express caloric content, use the word “energía” followed by the number of corresponding kilocalories, using the abbreviation “kcal” or “cal” as shown below:



Packages for food and non-alcoholic beverages considered as individual packages must report: saturated fats, other fats, total sugars, sodium, and energy, per packaging content:

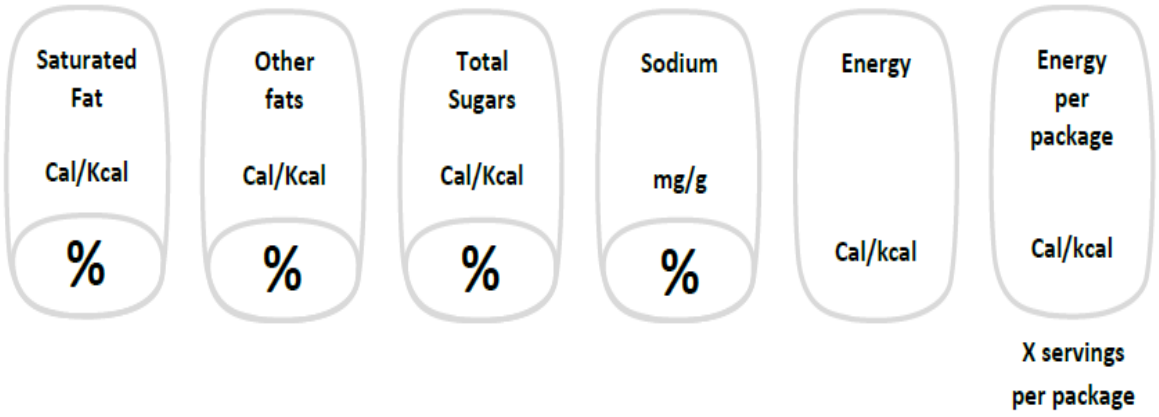
EXAMPLE OF A SINGLE PACK LABEL:



However, when it comes to family size packages in which the producer declares nutritional content declaration per serving, it must comply with the following:

- Nutritional content must be per serving, piece, or cooking measure.
- An icon in which total kilocalories are declared must be placed at far right of the core main icons.
- Number of servings per package under the last icon, as shown below:

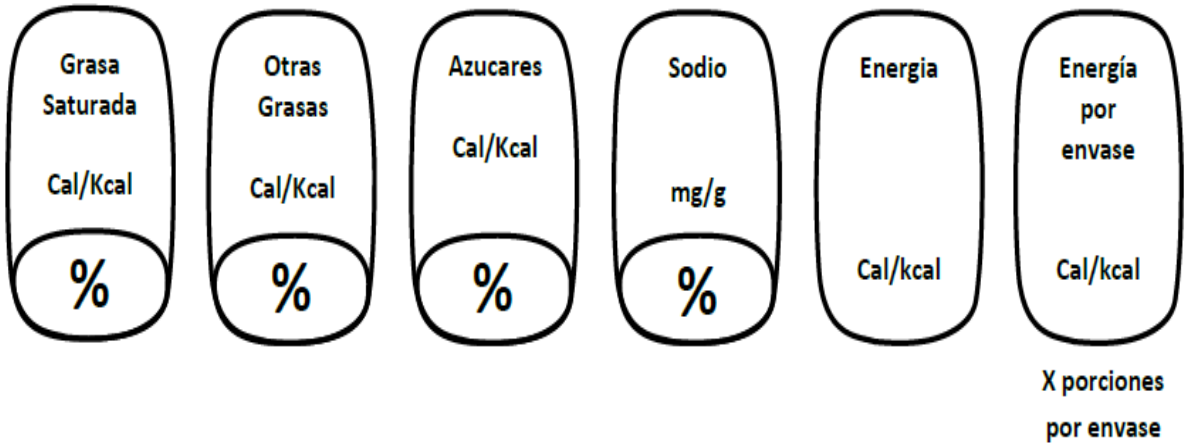
1-Fat content 2-Other fats 3-Sugars 4-Sodium 5-Calories 6-Package content
A serving size contains:



Mandatory declarations must comply with the following:

- Criteria established above, must be declared by package
- An icon placed at the far right must declare kilocalories per serving
- The number of total servings contained in the package must be directly under the last icon.

This information must be presented as follows:



This will not apply to:

- Flavored beverages that are considered to have a low caloric content
- Individually packed products whose content is lower than the referenced serving indicated above

When the nutritional value is lower than 5 kilocalories or equals zero, it must be declared as “0”. The same requirement applies for percentages.

In order to convert grams to kilocalories or calories, the following must be done:

a. Multiply the content in grams by its corresponding conversion factor:

Nutritional Content	**Kcal/Cal**	**Multiply value in grams by corresponding caloric value per nutrient**
Total Sugars	4 kcal/Cal	grams x 4 = value expressed in kcal/Cal
Saturated Fat	9 kcal/Cal	grams x 9 = value expressed in kcal/Cal
Other Fats	9 kcal/Cal	grams x 9 = value expressed in kcal/Cal

In order to indicate energy and energy by package, the sum of energy content of the following nutrients must be considered:

Nutriments	**Multiply value in grams by corresponding caloric value per nutrient**
Proteins	grams x 4 = value expressed in kcal/Cal
Total fats	grams x 9 = value expressed in kcal/Cal
Available Carbohydrates	grams x 4 = value expressed in kcal/Cal

b. Declare the result in whole numbers according to the following criteria:

i. If the decimal to be discarded is equal or greater than 0.5, then report the following greater unit.
ii. If the decimal to be discarded is lower than 0.5, then report the number.

The producer can opt to declare sodium content in whole numbers or with decimal numbers.

I. In the percentage value declaration the following shall be considered:
   a. Declare the result obtained in whole numbers according to the following criteria:
      i. If decimal to be discarded is equal or greater than 0.5, then report the following greater unit.
      ii. If decimal to be discarded is lower than 0.5, then report the previous unit.

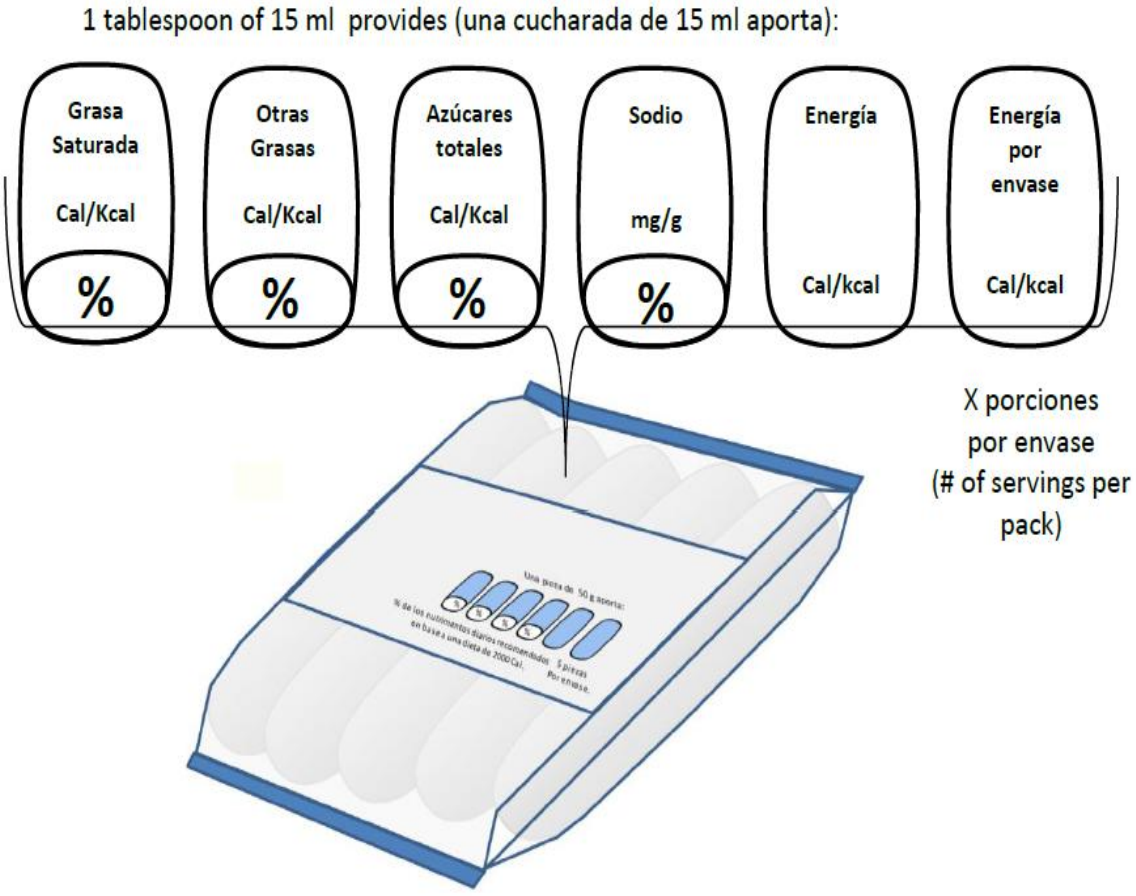
II. The note stating the package content by cooking measure, piece, or serving must be placed above

the mandatory icons referred to previously, using one of the following statements as applicable:
(English) (Spanish)

a. A cooking measure of xx grams (g) or milliliters (ml) provides / ("Una medida casera de xx g o ml aporta")
b. A piece of xxg or ml provides / ("Una pieza de xx g o ml aporta")
c. A serving of xx g or ml provides / ("Una porción casera de xx g o ml aporta")
d. This packaging provides / ("Este envase aporta")

EXAMPLE OF A FAMILY SIZE PACK LABEL:

1 tablespoon of 15 ml provides (una cucharada de 15 ml aporta):



Energy per pack icon must be included on plus-size servings per pack

The FOP may be complemented with a voluntary "nutritional stamp" based on nutritional profiles.

Nutritional profiles are very strict and developed by International Food & Beverage Alliance (IFBA)



The following products are exempted of requiring a FOP label:

a) Herbs, spices, seasonings or mixture thereof.
b) Extracts of pure coffee, whole beans, ground, decaffeinated or soluble or insoluble.
c) Herbal teas, decaffeinated or caffeinated tea, instantaneous and / or not containing soluble additives.
d) Fermented vinegars and substitutes.
e) The products and raw materials in containers intended exclusively for use and consumption by institutions/foodservice, which shall display on the front display area labeled "institutional presentation."
f) Food and non-alcoholic drinks where each nutrient per serving is less than or equal to 1% of the daily recommended nutrients.
g) The packages that contained two or more units of pre-packaged products in individual form, and intended for sale to the consumer as a whole.
h) The packages that apart from containing food or a non-alcoholic beverage are intended to serve as a gift or decorative item in itself.
i) The products whose individual presentation showing the legend "Not labeled for individual sale" or something similar, and which is in a multiple or collective packaging.
j) Those containers whose content corresponds to more than one type of individual product labeling may not always be labeled at least 70% of the products contained herein are labeled in accordance with this Agreement.
k) Products for sale in bulk.

Advertising Guidelines

The guidelines also include advertising restrictions for food and non-alcoholic beverages on open or

restricted television and in movie theaters. COFEPRIS also issued another set of guidelines limiting TV advertising of unhealthy products.

The products that meet accepted caloric content criteria can be advertised at any time in both open and restricted television channels, as well as in movie theaters, regardless of the rating. The products that do not meet accepted caloric content criteria (including confectionery, chocolate, and chocolate-like products) can only be advertised as follows:

- Open and restricted television: Monday to Friday - From 12:00am to 2:30pm and from 7:30pm to 11:59pm.
- Saturday and Sunday - From 12:00am to 7:00am and from 7:30pm to 11:59pm
- During broadcasts of soap operas, sports, news programs, sitcoms which are not officially rated for children and movies which are rated B, B15, C or D. (PG, PG-13, R)
- Movie theaters: During movies rated as B, B15, C or D, and during live broadcast or pre-recorded sports programs.

For product categories different to those mentioned here, these guidelines will go into effect January 1, 2015.

Type of Ruling: Additional Provisions to the Disease Control Regulation of Products and Services

Important Dates:
1. Guidelines Publication in the Diario Oficial - Date: April 15, 2014
2. Labeling requirements will be enforced by 2015

Post Information

For further information and to learn more about the services provided by the Agricultural Trade Offices (ATO) in Mexico, please contact us at:

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Other Relevant Reports Submitted by FAS Mexico:

Report Number	Subject	Date Submitted
MX3312	Proposal For New Food Labeling Requirements	11/1/2013
MX0318	Additional Changes to Food Labeling Regulations Nom-051	10/29/2010