



HEALA
Equitable access to healthy food

What you need to know about the Draft Regulation Relating to Labelling and Advertising of Foodstuffs (R3337)

The National Department of Health (NDoH) has released a draft of the **Regulation Relating to Labelling and Advertising of Foodstuffs (R3337 of 21 April 2023)**. In this regulation the NDoH has proposed that **mandatory front of package warning labels (FOPWL)** are put on all unhealthy food products & **new marketing restrictions** for the foods carrying these FOPWL, mostly aimed at protecting children.

HEALA supports the NDoH and believes that this regulation can make a positive difference in protecting the health of all South Africans.

Why does South Africa need front of package warning labels?

Front-of-package warning labels will help consumers make better choices and live healthier lives.

South Africans are eating more ultra-processed foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat – contributing to the obesity and non-communicable disease (NCD) rates and placing a burden on the health system.

Understanding what is in the food we eat can be challenging. The nutrition labels (currently on the back of food packaging) are confusing and difficult to understand or comprehend.

FOPWL on foods high in sugar, salt and saturated fat and containing non-sugar sweeteners provide consumers with a quick and easy way to understand what is in their food – helping them make healthier food choices by avoiding these unhealthy food products.

- ⚠️ **Too much sugar** can lead to obesity and diabetes
- ⚠️ **Too much salt** can put you at risk of hypertension
- ⚠️ **Too much saturated fat** can lead to heart diseases
- ⚠️ **Artificial sweeteners** is bad for your long term health
- ⚠️ **Diabetes, hypertension and heart disease** are all in the top 10 leading causes of natural death in the country
- ⚠️ **1 in 3 men, 2 in 3 women and 1 in 8 children are overweight or obese**



We have until 21 July 2023 to make comments to the Director of Food Control. Scan this QR code to make your voice heard.





What foods will get front of package warning labels on them?

All foods and beverages that have added salt, sugar or saturated fat and fall within “high in” thresholds or contain any non-sugar sweetener will have a FOPWL on them. These are usually packaged, processed or ultra-processed foods.

FOOD TYPE	EXAMPLES
<p>Minimally processed Foods straight from nature that have had a small change to them to make them easy to eat or they have nothing changed at all.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fresh / frozen fruit and vegetables • Chilled/ frozen meat • Pasteurized milk • Packaged grains • Pasta
<p>Processed foods Often similar to the original food. They still have its important nutrients, but processed foods usually have added sugar, salt and / or fat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canned fruits and vegetables • Freshly made breads • Cheeses • Cured / dried meats
<p>Ultra-processed foods (UPF) These have been changed so much they have very little, or none, of the original nutrients left in them. These are high in added sugar, salt or fat.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar sweetened beverages (SSBs) • Crisps • Ready-to-eat meals • Sweets • Biscuits • Fast foods

All black and white warning labels will be on the front, top right of the package of the unhealthy food, making it easy for the consumer to quickly see:



Why have marketing restrictions been put into the draft regulation and what are they?

The food and beverage industry uses many marketing tactics to make unhealthy foods and drinks especially appealing to children. They spend huge amounts of money to create brand loyalty and influence family decisions about what foods to buy.

In order to help protect children from the harms of unhealthy food marketing any food product that has a FOPWL on it **MAY NOT be marketed to children**. The NDoH has made the following rules:

Any package, label or advertisement of foods carrying a FOPL may not have:

- Celebrities, sports stars, cartoon-type characters, puppets, animations on it
- Competitions or tokens, gifts, or collectable item that appeals to children with it
- Children in mixed groups with young adults older than 18 years
- Abuse positive family values (portray happy, caring family scenarios)
- Show any brand name on footwear or clothing for sale

Any advert (visual, multimedia and audio) of products that carry an FOPWL must have the FOPWL in the advert & the advert must carry the following warning:

WARNING:

**This product is high in [insert key nutrients] / contains artificial sweeteners.
Excessive consumption may be detrimental to your health.**



What is in HEALA's public comment?

What HEALA likes about the draft regulation:

- ✓ Nutrient profiling model to identify unhealthy foods
- ✓ Mandatory easy to understand FOPWL on unhealthy foods
- ✓ Inclusion of marketing restrictions focusing on children

What HEALA thinks could be strengthened in the regulation?

- ⚠ Expanding the marketing restrictions
- ⚠ Putting pressure on the food and beverage industry to act quickly

What should I be eating to make sure I am healthy?

In South Africa, the NDoH made the FOOD BASED DIETARY GUIDELINES and the FOOD GUIDE. The aim of the guidelines and guide is to encourage people to eat a variety of foods from each of the food groups, in the correct amounts, and according to their needs.

Why is it important to be able to eat healthy?

Healthy eating:

- Helps promote good health
- Improves our overall sense of wellbeing
- Prevents short-term and long-term illnesses
- Can prevent malnutrition
- Provides our body with energy
- Improves our mental and intellectual ability
- Improves our ability to do everyday tasks

What do the South African Food Based Dietary Guidelines say?

1. Enjoy a variety of food!
2. Drink lots of clean, safe water.
3. Make starchy foods part of most meals.
4. Eat plenty of vegetables and fruit everyday.
5. Eat dry beans, split peas, lentils and soya regularly.
6. Fish, chicken, lean meat or eggs can be eaten everyday.
7. Have milk, maas and yoghurt everyday.
8. Use fats sparingly. Use vegetable oils rather than hard fats.
9. Use sugar and foods and drinks high in sugar sparingly.
10. Use salt and foods high in salt sparingly.

The guide uses circles to show the food groups, and the size of the circle shows the amounts we should ideally have every day.

