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## Updates to Canadian Food Labelling Requirements

Following swiftly on from similar changes in the United States, on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2016, Health Canada announced changes to certain labelling elements, predominantly surrounding nutrition and ingredient labelling. Labels in the new format may be observed as soon as 2017. Included are the first changes to the Nutrition Facts Table (NFT) since its inception in 2003, both in substance and in appearance, and declaration of ingredients, bringing food labels up to date with the dietary concerns and health requirements of today's Canadian population.

This brief White Paper outlines the changes

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## What has changed?

### *Nutrition Facts Table (NFT)*

Much like the United States, Canada has made significant changes to its Nutrition Facts Table, or NFT as it is known in Canada, to reflect the needs and consumption patterns of Canadians. It should be noted, however, that the new Canadian requirements have now diverged further from the requirements in the United States; it will be impossible to create a panel that complies with each market.

Among the Canadian requirements are the following:

**Serving Size:** Similar to the USA, packages containing up to 200% of the reference amount will require declaration of information per whole container, rather than the 150% required at present for packages over 100g/100ml. Certain serving sizes are standardised for ease of comparison (for yoghurt, for instance) and some serving sizes are changed based on how they are typically eaten (such as bread, which is usually consumed 2 slices at a time, which will have information declared per 2 slices).

**Vitamins and Minerals Declared:** Similar to the USA, Vitamins A and C are no longer mandatory. Potassium is required, but not vitamin D such as in the USA. Discrete values for vitamins and minerals are now required. Sugars have been given a daily value of 100g, which is a point of difference with the USA, and therefore the % Daily Value needs declaring for this.

**Nutrient Display:** Lines between types of fat and types of sugars have been removed, so the grouping is obvious. The order has been manipulated to show carbohydrate levels below fat, and sodium levels close to the vitamins and minerals. The serving size and calorie declaration have been changed for better emphasis. Finally, words that are the same in English and French on the NFT need not be repeated.

A footnote has also been added to the bottom of the Canadian table regarding the Daily Values. A statement of “5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot” is now required below the table.

An example of the old (on the left) and new (on the right) tables is provided below:

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
<b>Valeur nutritive</b>	
Per 250 mL / par 250 mL	
Amount	% Daily Value
Teneur	% valeur quotidienne
<b>Calories / Calories</b> 110	
<b>Fat / Lipides</b> 0 g	0 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0g	
<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol</b> 0 mg	
<b>Sodium / Sodium</b> 0 mg	0 %
<b>Carbohydrate / Glucides</b> 26 g	9 %
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 22 g	
<b>Protein / Protéines</b> 2 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	120 %
Calcium / Calcium	2 %
Iron / Fer	10 %

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
<b>Valeur nutritive</b>	
Per 1 cup (250 mL)	
pour 1 tasse (250 mL)	
Amount	% Daily Value*
Teneur	% valeur quotidienne*
<b>Calories 110</b>	
<b>Fat / Lipides</b> 0 g	0 %
Saturated / saturés 0 g	0 %
+ Trans / trans 0g	
<b>Carbohydrate / Glucides</b> 26 g	
Fibre / Fibres 0 g	0 %
Sugars / Sucres 22 g	22 %
<b>Protein / Protéines</b> 2 g	
<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol</b> 0 mg	
<b>Sodium</b> 0 mg	0 %
Potassium 470 mg	10 %
Calcium 26 mg	2 %
Iron / Fer 0 mg	0 %
*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot	
*5% ou moins c'est peu, 15% ou plus c'est beaucoup	

### ***Ingredient Declaration***

The format for the ingredient declaration has become much more standardised. The declaration is now required to be in black text on a white (or neutral with not more than 5% tint) background, clearly distinguishable from the surrounding background colour (if the rest of the pack is white, for instance, the ingredient declaration requires a border surrounding it). Ingredients can no longer be listed in upper case only, and must be separated by either commas or bullet points.

A more technical change is required for sugar ingredients. All sugars-based ingredients (mono- or disaccharides or combinations thereof) must be declared as if they were a compound food under the heading “sugars”. Colourings must also be described by their common name. For example, an ingredients list for a soft drink in English may read as follows:

<p><b>Ingredients:</b> Sugars (glucose, fructose) • Citric acid • Natural flavouring • Tartrazine • Sodium metabisulphite</p> <p><b>Contains:</b> Sulphites</p>
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### **Can I make a label for both Canada and the USA?**

Before changes to either label were announced, guidance from the Canadian Food Inspection Agency stated that the US Nutrition Facts Panel was incompatible with Canadian requirements and that a Canadian label was required. The changes from both the FDA and Health Canada have caused the requirements in the respective markets to further diverge, not just graphically, as the establishment of a daily value for sugars in Canada is a point of difference from the USA. It should also be noted that, for ingredient purposes, colourings in Canada, including tartrazine and similar, must be declared by

common name, as opposed to the USA, where the same colour would be listed as “Yellow 5” and cannot be listed as tartrazine. But graphically, the Nutrition Facts Tables of each country look less alike with their respective amendments than they did previously. As such, it is impractical to create a label that will cover both markets.

## **Other than Canada and the USA, where else are nutrition labelling changes happening?**

Nutrition labelling in accordance with Regulation (EU) 1169/2011 (the FIC) is now mandatory for most products within the European Union. Nutrition declaration also became mandatory in Japan in 2015 under the Food Labelling Standards (Cabinet Office Ordinance No.10 of 2015). The transitional period for processed foods and food additives is five years, and that for fresh products is 18 months.

## **When must the changes be made?**

Food packaged after 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021 must appear with the new labels, although the changes may be made at any time prior. However, it should be noted that, if the new Nutrition Facts Table is used, then all other aspects of the labelling amendments, including the new ingredient list format, must be followed as well.

For further information about getting your labels compliant with changes both in Canada and the United States of America, or label checks to ensure that your labels will be compliant with the new requirements, contact:

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