

Nutrition basics

– a resource for pharmacists

An update (March 2007)

Introduction

CPPE uses experts from different medical and pharmacy practice specialties to maintain the currency and integrity of its learning programmes. These are known as CPPE programme guardians.

This update has been prepared by one of our programme guardians and should be read in conjunction with the *Nutrition* learning programme. Where updated information has been provided, we have indicated the relevant section and page number in *Nutrition basics* for your reference.

Nutrition labelling – an update (see Section 3, page 43)

People often have difficulty in interpreting standard nutrition information. In response to this difficulty, front of pack nutrition labelling schemes have been developed. The two main approaches in use are:

- multiple traffic light labelling
- guideline daily amounts (GDAs).

Multiple traffic light labelling

In this approach, which has been developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA), the food is signposted as red, amber or green. (More information on ‘Traffic light labelling’ can be found by visiting: <http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/foodlabels/traffilight/>) These signposts relate to the amount of fat, saturated fat, added sugars and salt contained in the food. This scheme has been introduced by several companies, including Sainsbury’s, Waitrose, Co-op, Marks & Spencer and Asda. It is intended to provide ‘at a glance’ information on the level (high, medium or low) of these nutrients in a 100 g portion of the product and appears on the front of food packets. The front of pack label also shows the quantity of each nutrient – and what ‘portion’ this relates to (eg 100 g portion, complete pack, 250 g serving). Additional nutritional information is still provided on the back of many food packets – as outlined on page 44 of *Nutrition basics*.

The nutritional criteria for determining whether a product is high, medium or low in each nutrient have been established by the FSA and based upon EU legislation and advice from COMA and SACN. The criteria for low (green) replicate those in the EU Nutrition and Health Claims legislation (eg, low fat = < 3 g fat/100 g). A banding of high (red) for a particular nutrient applies to foods contributing > 25 per cent of the Guideline Daily Amount (GDA) for that particular nutrient per 100 g of the food (based on the GDA for women). A medium (amber) band is used when a food does not satisfy the criteria for either low or high for the particular nutrient. In general the criteria apply per 100 g of food. However, for foods eaten in quantities of more than 250 g (eg, ready meals), separate portion criteria apply. Such a food will be banded high (red) in a particular nutrient if one portion of the food

