



The aim of this leaflet is to help you pick out the information you need when you're trying to choose between food products.

## Can I trust the claims made on food labels?

It's illegal for food labels to have false or misleading descriptions – this includes the pictures as well as the words. So a yoghurt pot can't have a picture of strawberries on it unless the flavour comes completely, or mostly, from strawberries.

A few well known foods have kept their names because they're not misleading – we know, for example, that cream crackers don't contain cream, white grapes aren't really white and swiss rolls don't always come from Switzerland.



But if we *would* expect something to come from the place in the name, such as Cornish clotted cream, and it doesn't, the label must state where it *was* made.



## What about all the health and nutrition claims?

Although these must not be misleading, there are currently no legally agreed definitions. So it's best to treat all these sorts of claims with care:

- Fat free/Low fat
- Lite/Light
- Reduced salt/sodium
- High fibre
- No added sugar
- Unsweetened
- Helps maintain a healthy heart

You can check some of these by looking at the nutrition information panel and the ingredients. The ingredients are listed in descending order, with the biggest ingredient first.

Use this table as a guide when you read nutrition information on labels.

<b>This is A LOT</b> (per 100g food)	<b>This is A LITTLE</b> (per 100g food)
20g fat or more	3g fat or less
5g saturates or more	1g saturates or less
0.5g sodium or more	0.1g sodium or less
10g sugars or more	2g sugars or less

If the quantities fall between these figures, this is a moderate amount.

## What do the following mean?

### 'Bio' yoghurts

Most claim to contain 'live' bacteria, or 'cultures', which may be beneficial to health, particularly digestion. Scientists disagree over exactly how beneficial the bacteria are.

### e

When this symbol appears after a weight or volume, it means that the weight or volume of each pack might vary slightly, but the figure shown will be an accurate average.

### E numbers

These are additives that have been tested for safety and approved for use across the European Union. The name of the additive, the E number, or both, will be shown, as well as the reason it's there, such as 'colour' or 'preservative'.

### Extra fruit

If a label makes this sort of claim, the total amount of fruit (or other ingredient mentioned) that has been used to make the product must be shown on the label. This means you can compare similar products.

### Flavour

When the name of the food contains the word 'flavour', the food doesn't need to contain that ingredient. So cheese and onion flavour crisps don't need to contain any cheese or onion, but a cheese and onion pastry must contain both ingredients.

### Flavourings

The label will say if flavourings have been used, but individual flavourings don't need to be named.

### Fresh, Pure, Natural

These sorts of terms aren't defined in law, but other information on the label might help you to check these claims. For example, if a product claims to be 'pure', you could check by looking at the ingredients list on the label.

### Reduced calorie

This means the product should be at least 25% lower in calories than the standard version.

