

## Talking About Potato Nutrition

With the revised nutrition label for raw potatoes, we thought now was a good time to refresh the minds of all industry partners about the nutrients in potatoes and update you on approved wording for the various claims that are allowed on packaging. Using nutrition content and health claims can help boost consumer attitudes towards potatoes. The key is to be sure the wording is accurate and consistent.

Following is information that represents a relatively low risk of regulatory action by the FDA and FTC. We're making this available for guidance purposes. Any alterations could significantly increase the risk of regulatory action by the FDA and FTC, so it is up to you to use this information responsibly and correctly. You would have to defend yourself if the FDA or FTC challenges claims made on your products. Industry members are advised to consult a qualified labeling attorney before implementing any labeling claims.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact us at  
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### Nutrient content claims

These types of claims describe the level of a nutrient in foods. The following nutrient content claims are approved by the FDA to be used on potatoes:

- **Calories** – One medium-sized potato has 110 calories.
- **Fat** – Fat free; 100% fat free, zero fat, no fat, without fat, negligible source of fat, dietarily insignificant source of fat (e.g., “potatoes, a 100% fat free food”).
- **Saturated fat** – Saturated fat free, zero saturated fat, no saturated fat, without saturated fat, negligible source of saturated fat, dietarily insignificant source of saturated fat (e.g., “potatoes have zero saturated fat, naturally”).
- **Trans fat** – 0 grams trans fat. Cannot say “trans fat free.”
- **Cholesterol** – Cholesterol free, zero cholesterol, no cholesterol, without cholesterol, negligible source of cholesterol, dietarily insignificant source of cholesterol (e.g., “potatoes have no cholesterol”).
- **Sodium**- Sodium free, salt free, no sodium, without sodium, negligible source of sodium, dietarily insignificant source of sodium (e.g., “potatoes are naturally sodium free”). Cannot say no salt added or unsalted because potatoes are naturally sodium free.
- **Potassium** – Good source of, contains or provides potassium. Cannot say excellent source of, high or rich in potassium. Must mention the inclusion of potato skin (e.g., “skin-on potatoes are a good source of potassium”).
  - Potatoes rank highest for potassium content among the top 20 most frequently consumed raw vegetables and the top 20 most frequently consumed raw fruits (Source: DHHS FDA 21 CFR Part 101, Docket No. 2001N-0548, Food Labeling; Guidelines for Voluntary Nutrition Labeling of Raw Fruits, Vegetables, and Fish; Correction)

- **Fiber** – Although potatoes don't qualify for a nutrient content claim for fiber, the following is a sample nutrient message that can be used to describe potatoes' fiber content or can be adapted to describe the content of any of the other nutrients that are less than 10% DV:
  - "One wholesome, satisfying potato contributes 2 grams of fiber to the diet, 8% of the recommended daily value."
- **Vitamin C** – High, rich in, or excellent source of (e.g., "potatoes are an excellent source of vitamin C").
  - Potatoes are an excellent source of vitamin C (45% of the DV), which is the same amount as a tangerine but more vitamin C than one medium tomato (40% DV) or sweet potato (30% DV) (Source: DHHS FDA 21 CFR Part 101, Docket No. 2001N-0548, Food Labeling; Guidelines for Voluntary Nutrition Labeling of Raw Fruits, Vegetables, and Fish; Correction)
- **Vitamin B<sub>6</sub>** – Good source of, contains or provides vitamin B<sub>6</sub> (e.g., "Potatoes provide vitamin B<sub>6</sub>").

**Antioxidants** – There is no approved nutrient content claim for antioxidants so no statement can be made about the amount of antioxidants in potatoes (e.g., cannot say "high in," or "potent source of" antioxidants). However statements that say potatoes contain antioxidants are allowed, such as:

- Potatoes contain antioxidants; the amount and type depend upon the variety and cultivar.
- The predominant antioxidants in potatoes are vitamin C, certain carotenoids, and anthocyanins.
- Research continues to examine ways to increase the antioxidant content of potato varieties.

**Carbohydrates** – Please note that terms such as "low" and "net" are not permitted to be used to describe carbohydrates on food labels.

**Additional approved terms:**

- **Fresh** – The food is raw or unprocessed. It has never been frozen or heated and contains no preservatives.
- **Healthy** – The food is low in fat and saturated fat, contains no more than 140 mg sodium and no more than 20 mgs of cholesterol (e.g., "the healthy potato", "the potato is a naturally healthy food"). Saying a food is "nutritious" is not allowed as only entire diets can be nutritious.
- **Natural** – Nothing artificial or synthetic has been added to the food that would not normally be expected to be in the food.

**Structure/function claims**

Structure/function claims describe the effect a substance (e.g., nutrient) has on the structure or function of the body without reference to a disease. These claims must be truthful, substantiated and not misleading. The following structure/ function claims are relevant for potatoes:

## **Potassium**

- Potassium helps maintain normal blood pressure. Potatoes are a good source of potassium.
- Potatoes contain potassium, which helps maintain normal blood pressure.

## **Vitamin C**

- Potatoes are an excellent source of vitamin C, which acts as an antioxidant stabilizing free radicals, thus helping prevent cellular damage. (Source: Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine, Dietary Reference Intakes for Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Selenium, and Carotenoids, National Academy Press, Washington D.C. 2000. <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9810.html#toc>)
- Vitamin C aids in collagen production, assists with iron absorption, keeps your gums healthy and helps heal cuts and wounds. Potatoes are high in vitamin C.
- Potatoes contribute vitamin C to the diet, which helps protect your body from infection by keeping your immune system healthy. (Source: Food and Nutrition Board, Institute of Medicine, Dietary Reference Intakes for Vitamin C, Vitamin E, Selenium, and Carotenoids, National Academy Press, Washington D.C. 2000. <http://www.nap.edu/catalog/9810.html#toc>, page 95, 117)

## **Fiber**

- Although not technically considered a nutrient, fiber has been shown to be important to maintaining health.
- Fiber may help in controlling body weight and blood sugar levels (important in diabetes).
- Research suggests that fiber may help decrease the risk of some cancers and heart disease.
- Fiber aids in digestion and maintains bowel regularity.

## **Vitamin B<sub>6</sub>**

- Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> helps the body make nonessential amino acids needed to make various body proteins.
- Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> plays important roles in carbohydrate and protein metabolism.
- Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> is a cofactor for several co-enzymes involved in energy metabolism.
- Vitamin B<sub>6</sub> is required for the synthesis of hemoglobin – an essential component of red blood cells.

## **Unqualified health claims**

Unqualified health claims characterize a relationship between a specific food or food component and a disease or health-related condition. These are voluntary, FDA-approved claim however the prescribed wording by the FDA is cumbersome. If the nutrition information is not immediately next to the claim, you must reference where to find the nutrition information (such as a produce department poster, or a package panel). The following are examples of correct wording for unqualified health claims that apply to potatoes:

**Sodium and hypertension (high blood pressure)** – e.g., “Potatoes are sodium free. Diets low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a disease associated with many factors.”

**Dietary fat and cancer** – e.g., “Potatoes are 100% fat free. Eating a healthful diet low in fat may reduce the risk of some types of cancers, a disease associated with many factors.”

**Saturated fat and cholesterol and risk of coronary heart disease** – e.g., “Potatoes contain no fat, saturated fat or cholesterol. While many factors affect heart disease, diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of this disease.”

**Fruits and vegetables and cancer** – e.g., “Low fat diets rich in fruits and vegetables (foods that are low in fat and may contain dietary fiber, Vitamin A, or Vitamin C) may reduce the risk of some types of cancer, a disease associated with many factors. Potatoes are naturally fat free and an excellent source of vitamin C.”

**Potassium and the risk of high blood pressure and stroke** – e.g., “Diets containing foods, like potatoes, that are a good source of potassium and that are low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure and stroke.”

### **Dietary Guidance Statements**

These statements were developed by the FDA in cooperation with the National Cancer Institute (NCI) for use in labeling of fruits and vegetables. Attributing the statement to NCI is optional. Note that dietary guidance statements cannot be altered or expanded to reference potatoes specifically, or any other particular food. These statements were created to address the role of dietary patterns or general categories of foods (like fruits and vegetables), which is why the content of the statement cannot suggest that a specific substance is in the food. These are not subject to FDA review however they must be truthful and not misleading.

Examples of dietary guidance statements that apply to potatoes are:

- “Diets rich in fruits and vegetables may reduce the risk of some types of cancer and other chronic diseases, according to the National Cancer Institute.”
- “Fruits and vegetables are a healthy source of carbohydrate.”
- “Parents who eat a variety of fruits and vegetables daily are teaching their children an important behavior they are likely to imitate, and one that can provide them with disease-fighting benefits for a lifetime.”
- “Eating fruits and vegetables in place of calorie-rich foods that are high in total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, and sugar, along with regular physical activity may help with weight control.”
- “People who eat 5 or more fruits and vegetables every day as part of a healthy diet are less likely to develop cancer, heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes and other chronic diseases.”