



Health-Full Eating & Nutrition



Food Marketing and What's Important to Look For

Food Marketing

Often times when browsing the aisles of a grocery store, you'll notice many products have "reduced fat" or "100% organic" in big bold letters on the packaging. These products tend to be more attractive or desirable, and for good reason. Who wouldn't want to buy a product with less fat than its counterpart? Who wouldn't want to purchase produce that is "certified organic?" That's exactly what food companies are counting on; selling their products by means of appealing advertising and phrases printed directly on the product.

However, not all food marketing phrases are equal. Phrases like "no added sugar" may seem appealing, but what does it actually mean? In other words, what legal weight do these phrases carry? In this article we're going to look at common food marketing phrases and find out!

Low: This phrase is used in conjunction with a specified nutrient (fat, sodium, etc) for foods that can be eaten often, without putting you over the recommended daily intake of that nutrient.

Reduced: This phrase is used when 25% of the food's specified nutrient has been removed. However, it may not be use if the item's specified nutrient already meets the "low" definition previously mentioned.

Free: This means the food has so little of the specified nutrient, or none altogether, that it's unlikely to make a difference to your diet or body. For example, "calorie free" means less than 5 calories per serving. In addition, "fat free" means less than 0.5g per serving.

No ___ Added: This phrase is commonly seen as “no [salt, sugar, or fat] added,” and may also be used in conjunction with a few other nutrients. As the name implies, it means none of the specified nutrient has been added during production. However, if the food is dehydrated (such as dried fruit) or condensed (such as fruit juice), it may still contain higher amounts than desired.

High: This designation is used to convey the fact that the food product contains at least 20% of the daily value for a particular nutrient per serving. For example, many products boast being “high-fiber.”

Good Source: Similar to the “high” designation, this phrase is used when the food product contains 10-19% of the daily value for a particular nutrient.

100% Organic: This label indicates all the ingredients present in the food are certified organic, and the product bears the USDA Organic Seal on the packaging.

Organic: This label indicates at least 95% of the ingredients present are certified organic. This product would also bear the USDA Organic Seal.

Made with Organic Ingredients: This label indicates that at least 70% of the ingredients present are certified organic. However, unlike the previous two iterations of “organic,” products with this label may not bear the USDA Organic Seal.

Made from 100% Fruit Juice: This designation conveys the fact that the aforementioned product contains only liquid/pureed fruit. However, if the product also contains non-juice ingredients that do not result in the diminutions of the juice soluble solids or volume of juice, it may still bear the “100% Juice” label.



References:

- <https://www.cancer.org/healthy/eat-healthy-get-active/take-control-your-weight/understanding-food-labels.html#:~:text=Reduced,fat%2C%20salt%2C%20or%20calories.>
- <https://www.usda.gov/media/blog/2012/03/22/organic-101-what-usda-organic-label-means>
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