



24 September 2013

FDA Advisory  
No. **2013-038**

**SUBJECT: CONSUMER TIPS ON THE USE OF FRONT-OF-PACK (FOP) LABELS FOR MAKING HEALTHY DIETARY CHOICES**

Empowering the consumers to make informed choices on the amount of calories or energy, sugar, sodium, and fats help in reducing diet-related non-communicable diseases (NCDs) that afflict the Filipino population in urban areas, particularly children and adolescents. Obesity among children, acquired diabetes, juvenile hypertension, among other NCDs, are partly attributed to asymmetry of information and massive advertisement of processed food products. Consumers, especially children and adolescents, can improve their dietary habits by making correct food choices. Understanding the front-of-pack (FOP) labels of processed food products currently implemented by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) can facilitate correct choices.

On December 13, 2012, the FDA issued Circular No. 2012-015 to guide food processors and manufacturers to voluntarily print the energy or caloric content of processed food products on the principal display panels (PDP), aside from those printed on Nutrition Facts at the side or back information panel of food labels. The FOP label gives consumers ready information on nutritional facts by just reading the PDP of processed food products. Knowing the nutrient content relative to size per serving, the consumers are able to make healthy choices. It helps reduce receptivity and vulnerability of consumers to messages that lead to unhealthy dietary choices.

Children are exposed to unhealthy diet every day because of the poor choice of food made available to them in school and at home, which influence their eating habits.

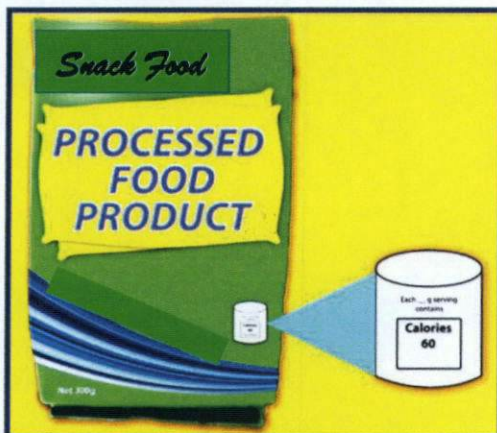


Figure 1. Principal Display Panel Sample

As shown in Figure 1, consumers should watch out for the calories declaration found on the PDP. The FOP declaration will be on the lower right hand portion of the PDP in a cylindrical shape with a white color background. Inside cylindrical shape graphics, the statement “each *amount in* grams per serving contains the *number of* calories or energy, and the percentage of the calories or energy value based on RENI (Recommended Energy and Nutrient Intake).







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**FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION**



Table 1. RENI for children

RENI for Children (Philippines)		
Children, y	BW (Kg)	calories
1-3	13	1070
4-6	19	1410
7-9	24	1600

Table 1 shows the RENI for children. For ages 7 to 9 years old, 1,600 calories is required per day. A serving of the *Snack Food*, for example, has 60 calories, which is equivalent to around 3.75% of RENI for the day. A consumer is able to compute how much more calories does he or she needs to be able to reach his or her recommended energy intake

for the day. The FOP information serves as a guide in monitoring caloric or energy intake. With this, the consumer is able to decide how much should be consumed. The package serving size informs a consumer how much is nutrient content of a processed food, but it will not tell him or her how much to eat. Deciding on how much of a particular food should be eaten is based on RENI, taking into account the age, the body weight and the type of activities or work.

In order to continuously empower the consumers to make healthy food choices, the FDA will soon expand the voluntary FOP labeling requirement to cover sugar, sodium and fats.

All food manufacturers, traders or distributors are enjoined to revise their labels and labeling materials to reflect the FOP label for energy or calories following FDA Circular No. 2012-015. The FOP labels are expected to be part of the food processors' educational and advertising campaign materials.

  
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