



## DECODING ADVERTISING

# Health Food Labels

### Natural

"**natural**" does not mean a healthier option! A product labelled as "natural" must not contain synthetic or artificial ingredients, but such foods may also be highly processed and contains other additives.

EG: High-fructose corn syrup (HFCS) is often labelled as "natural" as it originates from corn, but this lab produced sweetener is heavily processed and adds on to calories in the same way that sugar does!



### Light ("lite")

A "**light**" version of a food should contain less fat, calories, sodium or sugars than the original version by a stipulated amount. However, many manufacturers use the term to describe a lighter flavour or colour! Some of these "light" products may contain extra artificial sweeteners and flavouring, making it worse than the original!



In Singapore, a product is "**sugar-free**" if it has less than 0.5 grams of sugar per 100g, but they are not necessarily lower in calories!

Sugar-free products may contain carbohydrates like maltodextrin, which raises blood sugar, or sugar alcohols like mannitol or sorbitol, which causes diarrhoea when consumed in excess. Some also contain sweetener or fruit concentrate, which are as unhealthy as sugar!

### Sugar Free

Unless it's 100% **wholegrain** or **multigrain**, the product may still contain refined grains and flours! In Singapore, all food products labelled wholegrain would need to indicate the percentage of wholegrain ingredients used.

### Wholegrain



### Fat or Trans Fat Free

Free = zero! In Singapore, foods "**free of saturated fats**" contain less than 0.5 grams of saturated fatty acids per 100g, and "fat free" foods contain less than 0.15 g fat per 100 g of food.

"Low fat" or "fat free" foods does not mean "calorie free"! Some foods contain more calories as its full version as the process that takes fat out of foods involves adding sugar, flour, starch thickeners and other carbohydrates to keep the original taste.



Would you consider a product containing 2% fruit juice as one that is "**made with real fruit**"? The truth: many "real fruit" products contain a high percentage of added sugars and corn syrup, with only a small percentage of fruit! Many products do not indicate the actual percentage of fruits used, so look out for the ingredients list!

### Made with Real Fruits

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