



fighting heart disease  
and stroke

european heart network

## European Heart Network concerns regarding new nutrition claims

January 2012

The European Heart Network (EHN) expresses its concerns about the proposed revision of the annex of the Health and Nutrition Claims Regulation 1924/2006/EC (Claims Regulation) to allow two new nutrition claims:

*•No added salt*

*•Now contains X% less*

It is not clear to us how these claims provide any added value to people and their health.

*•No added salt*

From a public health perspective, it does not matter whether sodium/salt has been added to food or whether it is naturally occurring. A *•no added salt* claim implies that it is the added salt that matters in relation to a consumer's health needs and not the total salt – but this is not at all the case.

Moreover, consumers – and especially people who are advised to reduce or eliminate sodium/salt from their diet – may misinterpret the claim as meaning that there is no salt/sodium in the product whereas this is, of course, not the case. Even with the condition for use that the food product meets the criteria for making a *•low sodium* claim (no more than 0,12g sodium/100 g/ml), it is a claim that confuses rather than helps people.

<b>We recommend not allowing a <i>•no added sodium/salt</i> claim</b>
---

*•Now contains X% less*

Nutrition claims should signal significant health benefits

Generally, we see no reason why the conditions for making reduced/increased claims should be made less stringent. If nutrition claims are to be meaningful and useful to consumers, they need to ensure that they indicate foods that are *significantly* different from other foods (paragraph 15 in the preamble to the Regulation). Therefore, criteria for the relative nutrition claims *•reduced in x* and *•increased in x* should ensure significant reductions or increases

and we believe that "reduced" should mean a reduction by 30% and "increased" should mean an increase of **30%** as generally provided for in the current Nutrition Claims Annex.

Nutrition claims with similar wording should be regulated in a similar way

It is a principle of the Claims Regulation that "any [nutrition] claim considered to have the same meaning... should be subject to the same conditions" (paragraph 21 in the preamble). EHN considers that this is a very important principle and that any tendency to allow the proliferation of different criteria for claims with a similar meaning should be resisted.

It is hard to see how people can make a distinction between "reduced" and "now contains X% less" and, therefore, it goes against the legislative principle to allow the latter where the reduction need not be more than 15%!

Also, Article 9 of the Claims Regulation requires that comparisons between foods are within the same category, taking into consideration a range of foods of that category. So if a "reduced claim" is similar to a "now contains X% less", Article 9 applies. Therefore, allowing the "now contains X% less" to be made on the basis of the amount that was previously contained in the specific product and not to other food in the same category is misleading as the reformulated product may still contain more, sugar for example, than other products on the market in the same category.

**We believe that "now contains X% less" claims should not be permitted unless they meet the same conditions as "reduced" claims**