

# The more stars, the healthier.



## Information for Educators

The new Health Star Rating system provides a simple way to compare similar packaged foods. Health Stars provide an at-a-glance comparison of the nutritional profile of products on supermarket shelves.

Health Star Ratings range from ½ a star to 5 stars. The more stars, the healthier the choice.

### About the system

The Health Star Rating system was developed by the Australian, state and territory governments in collaboration with industry, public health and consumer groups to provide a simple and easy method for shoppers to compare the nutritional profile of packaged food.

The number of stars a product receives is determined by a calculator that scores the overall nutritional profile of a food. The calculator has been developed in consultation with *Food Standards Australia New Zealand* and other technical and nutrition experts. Points are awarded for positive nutrients (e.g. fibre, protein) balanced against other nutrients (e.g. sugar, sodium) to calculate a score per 100g/100mL, depending on the product.

The Health Star Rating system is being implemented by the food industry from June 2014 over five years on a voluntary basis. The number of products displaying the Health Star Rating system will increase gradually over this period.

### Why do we need Health Star Ratings?

Maintaining a healthy weight is important for us all. A healthy weight can help us live longer, get more out of life and reduce our chances of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, type 2 diabetes and some cancers.

Today, Australia has one of the highest rates of obesity in the world with 63% of adults and one in four children being overweight or obese<sup>1</sup>.

Improving our health can start with the choices we make in the shopping aisles. Nutrition information on food labels can sometimes be confusing or difficult to understand. We lead busy lives and don't have time to spend in the supermarket trying to 'translate' what it all means and compare the range of foods.

The new Health Star Rating front-of-pack labelling system is a simple way to read food labels. It will help you make simple comparisons between similar packaged food products, making healthier food choices easier.

For more information about the Health Star Rating system,  
visit [www.healthstarrating.gov.au](http://www.healthstarrating.gov.au)

## How to use the Health Star Rating System

The Health Star Ratings are designed to take the guesswork out of reading labels. They help you quickly and easily compare the nutritional profile of similar packaged foods and to make informed and healthier choices when shopping. The system is designed to be used in combination with a balanced diet.

Under the system, packaged foods are given a star rating between ½ and 5 stars based on their nutritional profile.

### This includes:

- ☆ Energy (kilojoules).
- ☆ Risk nutrients - saturated fat, sodium (salt) and sugars.\*
- ☆ Positive nutrients - dietary fibre, protein and the proportion of fruit, vegetable, nut and legume content.

\*These are linked to increased risk of obesity and chronic disease, such as cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes, if consumed in excess of recommended guidelines.

Health Star Ratings can appear on packs in two ways. The first shows just the star rating of the product; the second can show the star rating plus additional specific nutrient content of the product.



Some products may not show the star rating, or may show an energy icon on its own. Information about individual nutrients in these cases will still be available in the Nutrition Information Panel.

The Health Star Rating is one tool to assist Australians in following a healthy diet, and consideration should be given to other information such as the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating*. This guide provides information to help all Australians enjoy a variety of nutritious foods from each of the Five Food Groups.



It is also helpful to consult the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* to decide whether a food belongs in the Five Food Groups and is an 'everyday' food for eating regularly, or a discretionary food best eaten only sometimes or in small amounts.

### The Health Star Rating system does not apply to:

- ☆ Alcoholic beverages.
- ☆ Formulated products for infants and young children.
- ☆ Non-nutritive condiments (vinegar, herb and spices).
- ☆ Non-nutritive foods (tea and coffee).

The Health Star Rating system was designed for processed packaged foods, as it is often difficult to determine the nutritional profile of these products. The system is not intended to be used on fresh fruit, vegetables or meat; however some pre-packaged varieties of these may choose to use the system. It is important to consume a wide variety of foods from the Five Food Groups every day.

### Want more information?

The *Australian Dietary Guidelines* provide information for people of different ages, life stages and gender, on the minimum recommended average daily number of serves from each of the Five Food Groups. For more information, visit the Eat for Health website ([www.eatforhealth.gov.au](http://www.eatforhealth.gov.au)).