FDA Proposes Food Label Facelift

Food labels could get a major overhaul for the first time in 20 years. The Food and Drug Administration seeks to revise information about serving size, and include the most accurate information about ingredients.

Keywords

Citation

MLA

https://highered.nbclearn.com/portal/site/HigherEd/browse/?cuecard=68961

APA


CHICAGO MANUAL OF STYLE


Transcript

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SAVANNAH GUTHRIE, anchor:
All right. We move on now to some important news and it’s tied to the health and the foods you eat. Nutrition labels are about to change for the first time in 20 years. NBC’s Tom Costello has the story from Washington this morning. Tom, good morning to you.
TOM COSTELLO, reporting:
Hi, Savannah. These are the labels found on more than 700,000 products listing serving size, calories along with key ingredients. More than half of adults check them, but guess what, they’re not always accurate. Another day, another run to the grocery store for Julie Monticello. With six kids to feed, she’s always got one eye on the nutrition labels.
JULIE MONTICELLO: My red flag is if the label is like this long.
COSTELLO: But the labels themselves don’t always tell the whole story.
MONTICELLO: I try to look at the specific ingredients, but mostly I’m looking at how many ingredients.
COSTELLO: Now for the first time in twenty years, the FDA is proposing big changes. Here’s an existing label and here’s the proposed new label including more accurate serving and calorie information since most people eat far more than the current labels suggest. Producers would also have to include added sugars to the list along with potassium and vitamin D. And daily values for sodium and fiber would be revised.
MONTICELLO: See that is what’s important to me honestly because a lot of times I don’t have time to look at, you know, all the nutrients on a label.
COSTELLO: Advocates for accuracy in labeling say the changes are long overdue.
MICHAEL JACOBSON (Center For Science In The Public Interest): The kind of foods we’re eating are causing a lot of illness and premature deaths among Americans. The food label can help guide us towards healthier foods.
COSTELLO: It’s all part of Michelle Obama’s push to encourage families to make healthier food choices. MICHELLE OBAMA: Folks are really starting to think about what they eat and how active they are. So they’re scrutinizing labels. They’re asking questions. They-- they’re changing what they feed their families.

COSTELLO: This morning the Grocery Manufacturers Association says it’s time for some label changes but they should be based on the most current and reliable science. While at the Monticello home in Virginia --

MONTICELLO: Anything that makes life more simple is better for me.

COSTELLO: Yeah. Six kids, can you imagine? We mentioned the serving size changes to the labels on the new labels. This 20-ounce bottle of soda becomes one serving since most of us drink all of it, one serving not two and a half. And this ice cream goes from four servings down to two. Typical yogurt sizes also get better. So the whole idea is a little more reality in the labeling. Guys, back to you.

GUTHRIE: Yeah. I don’t know anybody who just has that half cup of ice cream. Tom, thank you so much.