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Qualitative Study on Use and Understanding
of Nutrition Labelling (HCPOR-07-36)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Method & Objectives

This study is based on six focus groups, two in each of Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver. One group was conducted with regular users of nutrition information on food labels on pre-packaged food and the second group consisted of individuals who used the information on an occasional, seldom or never basis (this group is referred to as the non-regular user group). At least half of the participants were recruited to be parents of children aged 2-12. The groups were conducted on October 9 in Toronto and October 11 in Montreal and Vancouver.

Focus groups are a qualitative research method, where participants are led through a discussion by a moderator. Participants are encouraged to provide open-ended and detailed responses to questions that allow for probing of inner thoughts and feelings. The results obtained from focus groups cannot be statistically projected to the population at large.

Participants in the groups were exposed to actual samples of nutrition labels on national products, which were used to help guide the discussion and provide concrete examples.

The objectives of the study were to:

- Assess awareness of current nutrition label information.
- Understand how nutrition labeling is read and used to make choices.
- Determine barriers to use and the factors that contribute to non-use.
- Assess current communications concerning nutrition labeling and understand how future campaigns can address issues uncovered in the groups.

Participants Have A Wide Variety Of Nutrition Information Sources And Needs.

Participants in these focus groups gather nutrition information from a wide variety of sources including all forms of media such as television news and magazines. Participants also mention they pick-up nutrition books and do general internet searches as well. Information on pre-packaged food was also listed as an important and very useful source of nutrition information.

Participants also have a wide variety of nutrition requirements when they shop, with some of the more common mentions being:

- Calories, fat, protein
- Trans fat
- Fibre
- Salt, sugar and cholesterol
- Omega 3's
- Whole Grains

Regular users seem to have more detailed nutrition needs and requirements compared to the non-regular users, and non-regular users tend to focus on claims such as "lite" or "Whole-Grain."

Of note, participants indicate that while they also look for certain vitamins and minerals (iron and calcium being mentioned somewhat frequently), they are not too familiar with the benefits vitamins and minerals provide or the amounts they should consume on a daily basis.

Participants Said Nutrition Information On Pre-Packaged Food Is Very Useful To Them & They Provided Details Of How They Use The Information. However, They Do Have Some Concerns, Of Which Trust Seems To Be The Biggest.

Health and nutrition claims on the Principal Display Panel (PDP) attract attention and for the most part are a cause for “further investigation” of information on the package. In fact, many participants said they look at multiple sources of information on the package, though this is more common among the regular user groups.

Those in Toronto and Montreal rely most on the Nutrition Facts table for information – the break-out of nutrition on the table was seen as being very useful. Those in Vancouver tend to rely on the list of ingredients. They understand that the list is ordered based on weight in the food and they have rules like “if sugar is in the top three ingredients, I won’t buy the product.”

When participants were asked in general about information on pre-packaged food being confusing in any way, participants in both types of user groups said that they were not aware of elements that were confusing about the information that appears on nutrition labels. The exception was Montreal non-regular users – they indicated that the Nutrition Facts table was a little vague.

To explore these responses further, participants were exposed to various sample pre-packaged foods. They identified a number of uses of nutrition information on pre-packaged food including:

- The reason that claims are causes for further investigation is because they are generally viewed with a healthy dose of scepticism. In cereals, for example, the claim would highlight the positive features of the product, but participants would look to see what “bad stuff” may be in there.
- Some participants looked at calories per serving to gauge opinion towards the food, though they did not know what their total caloric intake per day should be.
- The reference amount on the table was another item that participants in the English groups would normally look at first. Participants would see how much they were eating, and then look down at the Nutrition Facts table to get a sense of, as one participant said, “Let’s see what I’m going to be getting for my 35 gram granola bar.” Participants in the French language groups in Montreal referred to portion sizes that they would consume on their own. Only after probing were they fully aware of the reference amount on the table.
- Some participants would use the Nutrition Facts table just to look for a specific nutrient, vitamin or mineral.

With the packages in front of them, participants also identified a number of concerns as well. The concern, or particular theme of concern, that came up most often is trust. In some cases, participants do not understand how information is presented, and this lack of understanding causes distrust. Also, while there is some sense that nutrition labelling is regulated, few are confident that it actually is. The exception to this is the Nutrition Facts table. Participants have

a stronger sense that it is regulated and they do place trust in it. However, as participants found what they believe to be inconsistencies and points of confusion (even in the Nutrition Facts table), they also began to wonder why and how regulation would permit what is perceived as confusing elements on the label.

All of these concerns and more were discussed when individual elements of the packages were probed in detail, so the concerns identified are discussed below.

Participants Want More Information Than What Is Shown On The Principal Display Panel.

Participants were shown a number of different messages that could appear on the Principal Display Panel of a pre-packaged food. As mentioned, participants view these as a starting point for more investigation. Moreover, it was found that participants have a lack of trust in them. Specifically:

Health Claims

Participants are unaware that Health Claims are regulated by Health Canada. Knowing this would increase trust in them. But even if they knew that claims are regulated, participants had concerns that health claims lacked nutrition information, such as how much of a nutrient is required in order to obtain the benefit. They were also concerned with the fact that the statements said “may improve...” Without more definite information, participants tended to view this as a statement made by the marketers of the product and therefore did not trust it. Moreover, some were concerned with how small the statement was on the package – suggesting that was not something the manufacturer wanted people to notice.

Nutrition Claims

These tend to be noticed and used a fair bit, but they are not completely trusted. For example, participants, more so in the regular user groups, said that if a product is low in one nutrient, it is high in another to compensate and keep the product tasting good. Participants also did not know actual numbers or standards for the claims – so while they believe a product is indeed “low in” or “high in” something, they do not know the standard upon which the claim is made – and very few knew that Health Canada played a part in these claims. Participants in the non-regular user groups are more likely to be swayed by nutrition claims. For example, one participant mentioned “I buy what my wife tells me, and anything lite is good. It’s got to be the lite mayonnaise.”

Heart and Stroke Foundation Health Check Logo

Overall, participants did tend to notice this logo when they shop and during the product review and it has some use in product purchases. Many Anglophone participants, but not all, knew it was the Heart and Stroke seal of approval – some in Montreal initially felt it was a Health Canada seal of approval, and the icon appears to be less well-known in that market. When participants were asked what the icon meant to them, they indicated that it was a “seal of approval” – the concept of a “seal of approval” seems positive to people – according to some organization or standard, the product has met a certain set of standards.

Opinions of trust seemed to be split as well. Some trusted the logo but indicated that they would want to check the ingredient list or Nutrition Facts table to verify the accuracy of the symbol. However, at least once in each city, it was mentioned that manufacturers have to pay the Heart and Stroke Foundation for the use of the logo – and this seemed to reduce the credibility of the logo.

Whole Grain Banner

There were some participants who had noticed this while shopping. There are split opinions about the use, meaning and effectiveness of the banner. The main sentiment is that it is a marketing ploy to get people to buy the product. Participants who think this way feel that while whole grain may be healthier for people, the amount of sugar and other non-nutritious nutrients in cereal negates any sort of benefits. There were some participants, across both types of user groups who indicated they would consider products with the whole grain label on them – and that they would chose a product with a whole grain logo on it over one that did not have such a logo. There were a few participants in the English non-regular user groups who said that a product being whole grain would be all the information they need in order to purchase it.

Manufacturer Claims

Participants were shown two products that had manufacturer “seals of approval” or “stamp” on them which suggested that the product was nutritious in some sort of way. Participants pretty much knew that these were manufacturer logos that were trying to get people to purchase the product. The feeling was stronger in the regular user groups and less so in the non-regular user groups. A few in the Toronto non-regular group said that they would consider the information contained in these manufacturer claims as all the information they need to make a nutritional decision about the product.

The Nutrition Facts Table Raises A Number Of Issues For Participants

While the Nutrition Facts table is cited as one of the most useful pieces of nutrition information on pre-packaged food, there are a number of issues with it. Participants understand that the table’s break-out can be used to determine whether a food is high or low in a certain nutrient, and this is a key aid in purchase decisions. Participants use the table in this way to particularly examine sugars, fat, carbohydrates, sodium, cholesterol and certain vitamins and minerals, particularly iron and calcium.

It is very interesting, however, that with these positive feelings and usage patterns, there is a lack of engagement in the process of using the table and much confusion about it. Specifically:

- In most of the groups, there were at least a few participants who felt that the %DV referred to the actual percentage of a nutrient in a total serving – meaning that the %DV on the Nutrition Facts table should always sum to 100%. However, while the groups were able to self-correct themselves on this issue, even those who understand it are not fully confident in explaining the concept of %DV.
- While the reference amount on the table is well-understood and noticed in the English groups, there is concern about non-standard serving sizes within the same category of food. According to participants across all groups in the study, this represents one of the barriers to use of nutrition information on packaged food.
- Participants generally do not use the Nutrition Facts table to compare foods. Only a few participants were accustomed to doing this, and only a few confidently knew that they would use the %DV to compare foods. More would use the quantity of the nutrient to compare one product to another.
- Some wondered why many Nutrition Facts tables listed a vitamin or mineral with 0% beside it. While this was not confusing in and of itself, participants indicated it was not

necessary to display this kind of information, and this in turn caused some concern over how the regulations governing the tables are created and applied. Also, most participants were unaware of the core nutrients that are mandatory on a Nutrition Facts Table.

- People do not have specific values (e.g. numbers) or requirements for items listed on the Nutrition Facts table, and they are generally not forthcoming with details on how they would use or interpret the information they are looking at.
- Participants do not use the table once at home to plan servings.
- Some were concerned that there was no quantity or measurement beside the percentage for vitamins and minerals. A few did not know how they would be able to use the Nutrition Facts table to tell how much they should be ingesting. Participants also indicated that they did not know the benefits of vitamins and minerals, so the information contained in these sections did not have as much value to them as it could.
- There were some who were confused by the fact that the item break-out under the Fat and Carbohydrate categories did not sum to the total for these nutrients. This confusion has the affect of less use among some participants particularly in Montreal.

While there are issues that raise concern over trust in the Nutrition Facts table, overall, participants seem to feel that they could rely on the table. Some participants in each group mentioned that it was mandatory on pre-packaged food. Others had some idea that Health Canada regulates and monitors the accuracy. Some felt that the very standardized presentation (the same size, font, black and white scheme) gave a sense of regulation.

The Ingredient List Is Seen As Useful

Participants, especially those in Vancouver, find the ingredient list useful. In that market in particular but also in others, participants were able to look at the list and arrive at conclusions about a particular pre-packaged food. There is a general awareness that the list is ordered by weight of an individual ingredient in the food. Based on this participants knew if certain ingredients such as sugar, salt or oil were listed high, or frequently, in the list, they would not purchase the product. Also, participants would not buy a food that had a number of chemical sounding names in it.

There were two issues identified with the ingredient list. First, as it relates to chemicals – participants would like to know what chemical names actually mean. Second, some participants felt that marketing terms like “specially selected potatoes” or “fresh egg noodles” were sneaking into the list. They wondered if the ingredient list was indeed regulated, how manufacturers could use such terms.

There Are Ways To Communicate About And Increase Use Of Nutrition Information On Pre-Packaged Food

There is no doubt that people are using nutrition information that is on pre-packaged food. The issue is the degree to which participants are interested to use it in an informed, educated and sophisticated way. The following outlines some of the specific usage and communication points uncovered by the research:

- Some participants recognize that it takes a significant amount of time and effort to properly and effectively use nutrition information on pre-packaged food, and this is cited as one of the reasons for non-use. Those in the non-regular user groups for example tend to look for just one nutrient on the package, like fibre, calcium or salt. They are not using all of the information available.
- Some participants mentioned that nutrition information would only be of interest if they actually had a certain condition to manage or address. They did not see information on pre-packaged food as contributing to prevention of chronic diseases or conditions.
- Lack of use among both user groups is tied to some of the misunderstandings identified above, and a perceived lack of regulation. For example, when participants wonder why the %DV does not add up to 100%, or when they do not know the standards to which a nutrition claim is held, confidence in the label information is reduced and it is not used as much. Participants indicated one of the factors that would encourage increased use is to know that Health Canada regulates various aspects of nutrition labelling information , and why the labels are presented in the way they are. This lends credibility to the labelling and reduces the thought that some statements are just marketing claims from manufacturers.
- To the point above, besides being aware of regulation, usage would also be impacted if participants know why information is presented the way it is. For example, why is there inconsistent serving size information used on labels, why are only certain vitamins and minerals listed and why do the break-outs under carbohydrate not add to 100%?
- Participants expressed a desire to be motivated to use the labels by understanding how the labels more directly relate to nutritional outcomes or improved health. As one participant said “You spend so much time, effort and care putting this information on the side of the box, but I don’t know what it means to me. So many people don’t understand what a different type of fat is... I don’t know anyone else that researches the internet the way I do.”
- Some English language participants suggested using “Body Break” type marketing by tying a particular nutritional outcome or benefit to the information on the labels.
- In-store tear sheets that relate nutritional outcomes to the labels were another idea that generated a lot of interest.

Parents indicated that using labels in store with children can be difficult, and that convenience and taste are important when choosing food for their families.

Participants would expect to find label information in place like:

- The internet – general Google searches were mentioned as opposed to specific sites.
- Mass media that contains nutrition information such as newspapers, TV and magazines.
- In Montreal, “L’Épicerie” was described as a credible source of information and learning.

- Dial-A-Dietitian is used in Vancouver for nutrition information.
- Doctors, nurses and nutritionists
- General nutrition and recipe books

FAITS SAILLANTS

Méthodologie et objectifs

Cette étude repose sur 6 groupes de discussion soit deux dans chacune des villes suivantes : Montréal, Toronto et Vancouver. Dans chaque ville, un groupe était mené auprès de personnes qui utilisent régulièrement l'information inscrite sur les étiquettes d'aliments pré-emballés et le second groupe était composé de gens qui utilisaient cette information soit occasionnellement, rarement ou jamais (on se réfère à ce groupe comme étant des non-utilisateurs réguliers). Au moins la moitié des participants étaient des parents d'enfants de 2 à 12 ans. Les groupes de discussion ont eu lieu le 9 octobre à Toronto et le 11 octobre à Montréal et à Vancouver.

Les groupes de discussion sont une méthode qualitative où les participants discutent entre eux en suivant un schéma de discussion. L'animateur ou l'animatrice encourage les participants à fournir des réponses ouvertes et détaillées aux questions posées pour sonder en profondeur leurs pensées et leurs impressions. Les résultats générés dans le cadre de groupes de discussion ne sont pas statistiquement projetables à l'ensemble de la population.

Les participants ont également pu examiner divers exemples d'étiquettes nutritionnelles de produits de marques nationales pour les aider dans le cadre de la discussion et leur fournir des exemples concrets auxquels ils pouvaient se référer.

Les objectifs de l'étude étaient les suivants :

- Évaluer la notoriété de l'information actuellement disponible sur les étiquettes nutritionnelles.
- Comprendre comment les gens utilisent l'étiquetage nutritionnel pour faire leurs choix alimentaires.
- Déterminer les freins à l'utilisation des étiquettes nutritionnelles et les facteurs qui contribuent au fait qu'on ne les utilise pas.
- Évaluer les communications actuelles au sujet de l'étiquetage nutritionnel et comprendre comment des campagnes publicitaires futures pourraient aborder les problèmes soulevés dans les groupes.

Les participants disposent d'un grand éventail de sources d'information et de besoins nutritionnels.

Les participants recueillent leur information nutritionnelle d'une grande variété de sources incluant les médias sous toutes leurs formes dont, par exemple, les nouvelles à la télévision et dans les revues. Les participants disent également qu'ils consultent des livres sur la nutrition et qu'ils font des recherches générales sur ce sujet sur Internet. L'information sur les aliments pré-emballés est aussi considérée comme une source importante et très utile d'information sur la nutrition.

Les participants ont également une grande variété de besoins nutritionnels à considérer lorsqu'ils font leurs achats alimentaires; certaines des mentions les plus fréquentes incluent :

- Les calories, les gras, les protéines

- Les gras trans
- Les fibres
- Le sel, le sucre et le cholestérol
- Les Omégas 3
- Les grains entiers

Les utilisateurs réguliers semblent avoir des besoins et des attentes plus détaillés que ceux des non-utilisateurs. Les non-utilisateurs réguliers tendent de leur côté à se centrer sur les allégations de type « léger » ou « grains entiers ».

Il est intéressant de noter que les participants disent qu'ils recherchent également certaines vitamines et certains minéraux (fer et calcium sont assez souvent cités) mais qu'ils ne sont pas familiers avec les bénéfices qui se rattachent à ces minéraux ou vitamines et qu'ils ne connaissent pas les quantités qu'ils devraient consommer sur une base quotidienne.

Les participants disent que l'information nutritionnelle sur les aliments pré-emballés leur est très utile et ils donnent des détails sur la façon dont ils utilisent cette information. Cependant, ils ont certaines préoccupations dont la plus grande semble être la crédibilité.

Les allégations nutritionnelles et les allégations santé qui se trouvent sur le devant de l'emballage attirent l'attention et, dans l'ensemble, suscitent une recherche plus approfondie de l'information présentée sur l'emballage. En fait, plusieurs participants disent qu'ils regardent diverses sources d'information sur l'emballage; ceci est plus souvent le cas dans les groupes d'utilisateurs réguliers.

Les participants de Toronto et Montréal se fient surtout sur l'information présentée dans le tableau de la valeur nutritive – l'information nutritionnelle dans ce tableau est perçue comme étant très utile. Les participants de Vancouver ont plutôt tendance à se fier à la liste des ingrédients. Ils comprennent bien que les ingrédients sont présentés en ordre décroissant, en fonction du poids et ils ont établi des règles telles : « si le sucre est en haut de la liste des ingrédients, je n'achèterai pas ce produit ».

Lorsqu'on demande globalement aux participants si l'information sur les aliments pré-emballés prête à confusion de quelque façon que ce soit, les participants des deux types de groupes d'utilisateurs disent qu'ils ne connaissent pas d'éléments qui prêtent à confusion au sujet de l'information présentée sur les étiquettes nutritionnelles. Le groupe de non-utilisateurs réguliers de Montréal fait exception à cette règle – il indique que le tableau de la valeur nutritive est un peu vague.

Afin d'explorer ces réponses plus à fond, les participants ont ensuite examiné une variété d'exemples d'aliments pré-emballés. Ils ont alors identifié un certain nombre d'usages de l'information nutritionnelle présentée sur les aliments pré-emballés incluant :

- La raison pour laquelle les allégations suscitent une investigation plus approfondie réside dans le fait qu'on les envisage généralement avec une bonne dose de scepticisme. Par exemple, dans le cas des céréales, l'allégation mettrait en lumière les aspects positifs du produit, mais les participants vérifieraient aussi ce qu'elles contiennent de mauvais pour la santé.

- Certains participants vérifiaient le nombre de calories par portion pour se faire une opinion au sujet d'un aliment bien qu'ils ne sachent pas ce que devrait être leur consommation totale de calories par jour.
- La quantité d'aliment de référence inscrite en haut du tableau faisait aussi partie des items que les participants anglophones consulteraient normalement au départ. Les participants verraient alors quelle quantité ils mangent et consulteraient le tableau de la valeur nutritive pour se faire une idée. Comme l'a dit un participant : « voyons ce que je vais avoir pour mes 35 grammes de barre granola ». Les participants francophones de Montréal se référaient pour leur part à la grosseur de la portion qu'ils consommeraient personnellement. C'est seulement après que l'animatrice eut sondé en profondeur qu'ils ont remarqué la quantité de référence inscrite en haut du tableau.
- Certains participants se serviraient seulement du tableau de la valeur nutritive pour évaluer un nutriment, une vitamine ou un minéral spécifique.

Lorsque les participants ont eu les emballages en face d'eux, ils ont aussi identifié un certain nombre de préoccupations. Ce qui les préoccupait plus particulièrement et qui était mentionné le plus souvent était la confiance. Dans certains cas, les participants ne comprenaient pas la façon dont on leur présentait l'information et ce manque de compréhension les incitait à la méfiance. De plus, bien que les participants aient le sentiment que les étiquettes nutritionnelles étaient soumises à une certaine réglementation, très peu d'entre eux croyaient que cela se traduisait réellement dans les faits. Le tableau de la valeur nutritive faisait exception à cette règle. Les participants étaient beaucoup plus fortement convaincus qu'il était régi par des règles et, en conséquence, ils lui faisaient davantage confiance. Cependant, au fur et à mesure que les participants découvraient ce qu'ils croyaient être des inconsistances et des éléments qui prêtaient à confusion, même dans le tableau de la valeur nutritive, ils commençaient à se demander pourquoi et comment ces règles pourraient permettre ce qu'ils percevaient être des éléments qui prêtaient à confusion sur l'étiquette.

Toutes ces préoccupations, et plus encore, ont été discutées lorsqu'on sondait plus en profondeur divers éléments spécifiques sur les emballages. Ces préoccupations sont identifiées et discutées plus en détail ci-dessous.

Les participants veulent plus d'information que ce qui est présenté sur le devant de l'emballage.

Nous avons ensuite montré aux participants plusieurs messages différents qui pourraient être apposés sur le devant de l'emballage des aliments pré-emballés. Tel que déjà mentionné, ceux-ci considèrent cette information comme point de départ pour poursuivre leur investigation. Qui plus est, nous avons découvert que les participants manquaient aussi de confiance en eux, et plus spécifiquement en ce qui a trait aux :

Allégations santé

Les participants ne savent pas que les allégations santé sont réglementées par Santé Canada. La connaissance de cet aspect augmenterait certes leur confiance dans ces allégations. Mais même lorsqu'ils savaient que ces allégations sont réglementées, les participants étaient préoccupés par le fait qu'elles avaient des lacunes au niveau de l'information nutritionnelle, comme par exemple, quelle quantité d'un nutriment est requise pour obtenir le bénéfice indiqué. Ils étaient aussi préoccupés par le fait que ces énoncés disaient : « peut améliorer... ». En l'absence d'information plus définitive, les participants avaient tendance à envisager ces énoncés comme étant produits par l'équipe de mise en marché du produit et, dans ces

conditions, ils ne les croyaient pas. De plus, certains étaient préoccupés par la petite taille de l'énoncé sur l'emballage – ce qui suggérait pour eux qu'il ne s'agissait pas de quelque chose que le manufacturier souhaitait que les gens remarquent.

Allégations nutritionnelles

Les participants ont tendance à les remarquer et à les utiliser passablement, mais ils ne leur font pas confiance complètement. Par exemple, les participants, et plus particulièrement ceux des groupes d'utilisateurs réguliers, disent que si un produit contient une faible quantité d'un nutriment donné, c'est parce qu'il a une teneur élevée en un autre nutriment pour compenser, ce qui fait que le produit continue à avoir bon goût. Les participants ne connaissent pas non plus les chiffres ou normes qui gèrent ces allégations – alors, pendant qu'ils croient qu'un produit a certes une teneur « faible » ou « élevée » en quelque chose, ils ignorent les normes selon lesquelles ces allégations sont faites – et très peu d'entre eux savaient que Santé Canada avait un rôle à jouer en matière d'allégations. Les participants des groupes de non-utilisateurs réguliers sont plus susceptibles d'être impressionnés par les allégations nutritionnelles. Par exemple, un participant a indiqué qu'il « achète ce que sa femme lui dit et que n'importe quoi qui est léger est bon. Il faut que ce soit de la mayonnaise légère. »

Logo VISEZ SANTÉ de la Fondation des maladies du cœur

Globalement, les participants avaient tendance à remarquer ce logo lorsqu'ils faisaient leurs achats d'épicerie comme lorsqu'ils ont examiné les produits qu'on leur présentait : ils disent que c'est utile lors de l'achat de produits. Plusieurs participants anglophones, mais pas tous, savaient qu'il s'agissait du sceau d'approbation de la Fondation des maladies du cœur – certains à Montréal ont initialement pensé qu'il s'agissait d'un sceau d'approbation de Santé Canada, ce logo semblait moins bien connu dans ce marché. Lorsqu'on a demandé aux participants ce que ce logo signifiait pour eux, ils ont indiqué qu'il s'agissait d'un « sceau d'approbation » établi par certains organismes ou régi par certains critères – le concept d'un « sceau d'approbation » semble avoir une connotation positive pour les gens – et qu'en conséquence, le produit rencontrait une série de normes préétablies.

Les opinions quant à la confiance à accorder à ce logo étaient mitigées. Certains faisaient confiance au logo mais précisait qu'ils auraient voulu pouvoir vérifier la liste des ingrédients ou le tableau de la valeur nutritive pour valider la véracité de ce symbole. Cependant, au moins une fois dans chaque ville, on mentionnait que les fabricants devaient payer la Fondation des maladies du cœur pour utiliser ce logo – et ceci semblait en réduire la crédibilité.

Bandeau « grains entiers »

Certains participants avaient déjà remarqué ce bandeau pendant qu'ils faisaient leurs achats d'épicerie. Les opinions étaient partagées au sujet de l'utilisation, du sens et de l'efficacité de ce bandeau. Le sentiment prédominant était qu'il s'agissait d'un stratagème marketing pour que les gens achètent le produit. Les personnes qui partageaient cet avis estimaient que, bien que les grains entiers puissent être plus sains pour les gens, la quantité de sucre et d'autres nutriments non nutritifs contenus dans les céréales en rendaient nuls quelque bénéfice que ce soit. Certains participants, des deux types d'utilisateurs, ont indiqué qu'ils considéreraient les produits identifiés d'un bandeau « grains entiers » – et qu'ils choisiraient un produit comportant ce bandeau plutôt qu'un produit qui n'aurait pas ce genre de logo. Quelques participants, dans les groupes anglophones de non-utilisateurs réguliers, ont dit qu'un produit arborant la mention « grains entiers » leur fournissait toute l'information dont ils avaient besoin pour l'acheter.

Allégations du fabricant

Nous avons ensuite montré deux produits affichant des sceaux d'approbation du fabricant qui suggéraient que le produit était nutritif d'une façon ou d'une autre. Globalement, les participants réalisaient bien que ces logos provenaient des fabricants qui essaient de convaincre les consommateurs d'acheter leur produit. Cette impression était plus forte chez les utilisateurs réguliers et moins chez les non-utilisateurs réguliers. Quelques personnes du groupe de non-utilisateurs de Toronto ont dit qu'elles considéreraient l'information véhiculée par ces allégations du fabricant comme étant la seule source d'information qu'elles utiliseraient pour prendre une décision au sujet de l'aspect nutritionnel d'un produit.

Le tableau de la valeur nutritive soulève un certain nombre de questions

Bien que le tableau de la valeur nutritive soit décrit comme une des sources d'information nutritionnelle les plus utiles sur l'étiquette des produits pré-emballés, il présente néanmoins un certain nombre de problèmes. Les participants comprennent que la nomenclature du tableau peut servir à déterminer si un aliment contient beaucoup ou peu d'un certain nutriment, et ceci constitue une aide précieuse dans leurs décisions d'achat. Les participants se servent du tableau de cette façon plus particulièrement pour examiner les sucres, le gras, les lipides, le sodium, le cholestérol ainsi que certaines vitamines et minéraux, particulièrement le fer et le calcium.

Cependant, il est intéressant de noter que, malgré ces impressions positives et ces exemples concrets, il y est un manque au niveau de l'utilisation de ce tableau et beaucoup de confusion à son sujet. Plus particulièrement :

- Dans la plupart des groupes, au moins quelques participants estimaient que le pourcentage de la valeur quotidienne d'un nutriment représentait l'apport de ce nutriment dans une portion – ce qui veut dire que la somme des pourcentages quotidiens inscrits sur le tableau de la valeur nutritive devrait toujours additionner à 100%. Cependant, bien que les groupes soient capables de s'auto-corriger à ce sujet, même ceux qui semblaient comprendre le concept au départ, n'étaient pas complètement rassurés lorsqu'ils expliquaient le concept du pourcentage de la valeur quotidienne.
- Alors que la quantité de référence inscrite sur le tableau est bien comprise et remarquée dans les groupes anglophones, on note des préoccupations concernant l'absence de normes régissant la grosseur des portions dans une même catégorie d'aliments. D'après les participants de tous les groupes, ceci constitue un des freins à l'utilisation de l'information nutritionnelle sur les emballages alimentaires.
- Les participants n'utilisent pas généralement le tableau de la valeur nutritive pour comparer les aliments. On ne compte que quelques personnes qui étaient habituées à le faire et seulement quelques-unes qui étaient certaines qu'elles utiliseraient le pourcentage de la valeur quotidienne pour comparer les aliments. Un plus grand nombre utiliserait la quantité de nutriments pour effectuer la comparaison d'un produit à un autre.
- Certains se sont demandés pourquoi on inscrirait une vitamine ou un minéral assorti de la mention 0% sur le tableau de la valeur nutritive. Bien que cela ne prête pas à confusion en soi, les participants ont indiqué qu'il n'était pas nécessaire de présenter ce genre d'information et qu'en retour, ceci suscitait des questions sur les règles qui

régissent la façon de créer et de mettre en application ce genre de tableau. De plus, la plupart des participants ignoraient quels nutriments étaient obligatoires dans le tableau de la valeur nutritive.

- Les gens n'ont pas de critères de référence spécifiques (c'est-à-dire de nombres) ou de valeurs baromètres pour les aider à comprendre les items présentés dans le tableau de la valeur nutritive. Ils ne suggèrent pas non plus de façons dont ils pourraient se servir ou interpréter l'information qui s'y trouve.
- Les participants n'utilisent pas ce tableau pour planifier leurs portions lorsqu'ils sont de retour à la maison.
- Certains étaient préoccupés du fait qu'il n'y ait pas de quantité ou de mesure à côté du pourcentage associé aux vitamines ou aux minéraux. Quelques uns ne savaient pas comment ils pourraient se servir du tableau de la valeur nutritive pour dire quelle quantité ils devraient ingérer. Les participants ont également souligné qu'ils ne connaissaient pas les bénéfices des vitamines et minéraux, donc que l'information présentée dans ces sections n'avait pas autant de valeur pour eux qu'elle le pourrait.
- Certains étaient confus parce que la somme des nutriments énumérés sous lipides et glucides n'additionnait pas au total inscrit pour ces catégories. En conséquence, certains participants, particulièrement à Montréal se servaient moins de cette information.

Bien qu'il y ait des questions soulevées au sujet de la confiance dans le tableau de la valeur nutritive, globalement, les participants semblaient croire qu'ils pourraient se fier à ce tableau. Certains participants ont indiqué qu'il était obligatoire sur les aliments pré-emballés. D'autres croyaient que Santé Canada le réglementait et en supervisait l'exactitude. Certains estimaient que la présentation très normalisée (même grosseur, même caractère d'imprimerie, même présentation blanc et noir) donnait une allure de réglementation.

On perçoit la liste des ingrédients comme étant utile

Les participants, et plus particulièrement ceux de Vancouver, trouvent que la liste des ingrédients est utile. Dans ce dernier marché, mais aussi dans les autres, les participants sont capables de regarder la liste et de parvenir à une conclusion au sujet d'un aliment pré-emballé spécifique. Les participants savent généralement que la liste est présentée en ordre décroissant en fonction du poids de chaque ingrédient qui compose un aliment. En se fondant sur cette opinion, les participants pouvaient décider, lorsque certains ingrédients tels le sucre, le sel ou l'huile étaient en tête de liste ou fréquemment mentionnés, qu'ils n'achèteraient pas ce produit. De plus, les participants ne voulaient pas acheter un aliment qui comportait des ingrédients dont les noms avaient une consonance chimique.

Deux problèmes ont été retenus à propos de la liste des ingrédients. Tout d'abord, pour ce qui a trait à l'aspect chimique – les participants voudraient savoir ce que les noms chimiques signifient réellement. Deuxièmement, certains participants ont remarqué que des termes ou qualificatifs marketing comme « pommes de terre spécialement choisies » ou « pâtes aux œufs frais » arrivaient à se glisser dans la liste. Ils se sont alors demandé comment les fabricants pouvaient utiliser ce genre de terminologie si la liste des ingrédients était vraiment réglementée.

Il y a des moyens pour communiquer et augmenter l'utilisation de l'information nutritive sur les aliments pré-emballés.

Il n'y a aucun doute que les gens utilisent l'information nutritionnelle qui se trouve sur les aliments pré-emballés. Le problème concerne le degré d'intérêt des participants à s'en servir de façon informée, éduquée et sophistiquée. Les points suivants illustrent certains usages spécifiques et éléments de communication révélés dans cette recherche :

- Certains participants reconnaissent volontiers qu'ils doivent consacrer beaucoup de temps et d'effort afin de se servir correctement et efficacement de l'information nutritionnelle présentée sur les aliments préemballés, et ceci est cité comme motif de non-utilisation. Par exemple, les participants des groupes de non-utilisateurs réguliers ont tendance à ne regarder qu'un seul nutriment sur l'emballage comme les fibres, le calcium ou le sel par exemple. Ils n'utilisent pas toute l'information disponible.
- Certains participants disent que l'information nutritionnelle ne les intéresserait que s'ils devaient faire face à certains problèmes de santé. Ils ne considèrent pas l'information présentée sur les emballages alimentaires comme outil de prévention des maladies chroniques.
- L'absence d'utilisation chez les deux types de groupes est reliée à l'incompréhension des aspects identifiés ci-haut ainsi qu'à la perception d'une absence de réglementation. Par exemple, lorsque les participants se demandent pourquoi le pourcentage de la valeur quotidienne n'additionne pas à 100% ou lorsqu'ils ne connaissent pas les normes qui servent à établir les allégations nutritionnelles, le niveau de confiance dans l'information présentée sur l'étiquette est réduite et celle-ci n'est pas utilisée autant qu'elle pourrait l'être. Les participants indiquent qu'un des facteurs qui les encouragerait à augmenter leur utilisation serait le fait de savoir que Santé Canada régit les divers aspects de l'étiquetage nutritionnel et de comprendre pourquoi les étiquettes sont présentées de cette façon. Ceci ajouterait de la crédibilité à l'étiquetage et réduirait l'impression que certains énoncés ne sont que des allégations marketing faites par les fabricants.
- Pour étayer le point précédant, en plus d'être au courant de la réglementation, le fait de savoir pourquoi l'information est ainsi formatée pourrait avoir aussi un impact sur l'utilisation de l'information. Par exemple, pourquoi les portions de référence varient-elles sur les étiquettes, pourquoi n'indique-t-on que certaines vitamines et certains minéraux et, enfin, pourquoi la somme des nutriments sous glucides n'additionne-t-elle pas à la valeur totale indiquée.
- Les participants ont souhaité qu'on les motive à utiliser les étiquettes en leur expliquant plus directement comment relier l'information nutritionnelle et les améliorations à la santé. Comme un participant l'a dit : « vous consacrez tellement de temps, d'effort et d'attention à mettre cette information sur le côté des boîtes, mais je ne sais pas ce que ça veut dire pour moi. Il y a tellement de gens qui ne comprennent pas les différents types de gras...je ne connais personne d'autre qui fasse de la recherche sur Internet comme j'en fais. »

- Certains participants anglophones ont suggéré d'utiliser une approche marketing de type « Body Break » en reliant un bénéfice nutritionnel à l'information qui se trouve sur les étiquettes.
- Une autre idée qui a suscité beaucoup d'intérêt est d'utiliser des feuillets en magasin pour établir un lien entre les bénéfices nutritionnels et l'information présentée sur les étiquettes des aliments

Les parents ont indiqué que le fait de se servir de l'étiquetage nutritionnel en magasin lorsqu'ils y sont avec leurs enfants s'avère difficile et que la facilité de préparation et le goût sont des facteurs importants lorsqu'ils choisissent des aliments pour leur famille.

Les participants s'attendent à trouver de l'information au sujet des étiquettes à des endroits tels:

- L'Internet – le moteur de recherche de Google a été mentionné plutôt que des sites spécifiques.
- Les médias de masse qui contiennent de l'information nutritionnelle telle: journaux, télévision et revues.
- À Montréal, l'émission "L'Épicerie" a été décrite comme source d'information et d'acquisition de connaissances crédible
- Dial-A-Dietitian est utilisé à Vancouver pour obtenir de l'information nutritionnelle.
- Les médecins, infirmières et nutritionnistes
- Des livres portant sur la nutrition en générale et des livres de recettes.

BACKGROUND, OBJECTIVES & METHOD

BACKGROUND & OBJECTIVES

By December 2007, nutrition labelling regulations will become mandatory on all foods. These regulations govern the use of three types of labelling features including:

- A mandatory Nutrition Facts table
- Nutrition claims, which include nutrient content claims covering terms like “light” and “free” and Diet-Related Health Claims that link certain nutrients to particular health issues.
- Ingredients Lists that identify sources of certain nutrients in food and their relative importance.

While quantitative research indicates that 77% of Canadians have used food product labels at least once in the previous year, there is a need to understand how Canadians use these food labels, why they are not being used and the barriers faced in using them. Answers to these key questions will guide future educational messaging, and they guide the objectives of this study which are to:

- **Assess Canadian’s awareness of nutrition labelling** focusing on knowledge of different labelling information and awareness of government involvement in it.
- **Understand how Canadians use nutrition labelling** to get a sense of how much information is being used and for what purpose – are they using it to compare foods, select foods based on their health needs or assess the amount of food to eat? Another goal is to understand how Canadians use different pieces of information, referred to elements, on the package to come to a conclusion about the food.
- **Determine barriers to use** and what factors cause non-use. This investigated aspects of the labels themselves (e.g. what is misunderstood or confusing), trust in the information and general gaps in nutrition knowledge.
- **Assess current communications concerning nutrition labeling** in order to understand what Canadians are hearing about nutrition labeling and how future campaigns can address issues uncovered in the groups.

Methodology & Target Audience

Six focus groups were conducted - two in each of Vancouver and Toronto in English and two in Montreal in French in early October, 2007. One group in each city had participants who regularly used the nutrition information on food labels when looking for pre-packaged food. The other group in each city was comprised of individuals who occasionally, seldom or never used the nutrition information on food labels (this group will be called non-regular users throughout the report). Half the participants in each group were recruited to be parents of children aged 2-12. Participants were recruited to reflect a wide mix of demographic profiles including education, income and occupation. Participants were screened on sensitive occupations such as individuals who work for food companies or are in occupations where they provide nutrition information. All participants had to indicate that nutrition considerations have at least some role when shopping for food.

The recruitment of Toronto and Vancouver participants was done from the Western Opinion/ NRG Research Group's field centre located in Winnipeg. Montreal recruiting was done from Opinion-Impact's Montreal field centre. Participants were recruited at random from the general population surrounding the location of the groups and were supplemented with lists of individuals interested in attending focus groups. All participants were screened to ensure that they had not attended a group session within the last six months and that they had never attended groups with a topic similar to these.

In total, 12 participants were recruited for each group for eight to 10 show, and attendance for each group was:

- Vancouver 9 regular users, 10 non-regular users
- Toronto 10 regular users, 9 non-regular users
- Montreal 8 regular users, 9 non-regular users

The groups in Toronto were held October 9 and those in Vancouver were held October 11. Brian Baupal moderated these groups in English. Nadia Papineau-Couture moderated the Montreal groups in French on October 11.

Participants were provided with actual samples of packaged food to aid the discussion and provide examples of nutrition information that could be used within the groups. The same packages were used in the English and French groups. A full list of food included is included in The Appendix to this document, and includes key features of the packages that were discussed in the groups. Participants were also shown sample Diet Related Health Claims, Nutrition Facts tables and ingredient lists, which are also included in The Appendix.

Context of Qualitative Research

The primary benefit of focus group discussions is that they allow for in-depth probing with qualifying participants on behaviour, habits, usage patterns, perceptions and attitudes related to the subject matter. The group discussion allows for flexibility in exploring other areas that may be pertinent to the investigation.

The focus group technique is used in marketing research as a means of gaining insight and direction, rather than collecting quantitatively precise data or absolute measures. Although numbers, or measures of quantity (e.g. "most group members feel...") are sometimes presented as illustrative of the opinions of the participants in this study, these are offered for insight and should not be considered statistically reliable. Results in this report are not statistically projectable to the population at large.

Reporting Conventions

Those in the group who use nutrition information regularly are referred to as "regular users" in this report. Those who are in the group who use nutrition information occasionally, seldom or never are called "non-regular users" in this report. A list of products shown in the groups is provided in the Appendix, however, product brand names are not referenced in the body of the report.

DETAILED FINDINGS

1. General Use Of Nutrition Information

Participants were asked questions about what they look for in packed food in general, and concerning nutrition information specifically. They were also asked about the sources from which they get nutrition information and were given various product packaged to determine which sources of information they normally use.

Participants Have Many Criteria When Choosing Food

While participants knew the topic of the groups was nutrition, they were asked to indicate what they look for when they shop for food – beyond nutritional elements. Some of those items included:

- Price/What's on sale/What's cheapest
- Value – not what's necessarily the cheapest, but what represents good value
- Brand – either something they like or are familiar with
- Freshness of produce and where it is grown
- Habitual shopping – what was bought regularly, or even by their parents
- What children like
- Variety of choice that comes from a larger grocery store
- Taste

Participants Also Have A Wide Variety of Nutrition Needs – However, There Are Some Common Criteria

While there is significant variance from individual to individual about what their nutrition needs are when they shop for food, some common criteria were expressed across the groups:

- Low sodium/salt/MSG
- Low sugar – food that is high in sugar is considered “junk food” for children
- Low fat
- No trans fat
- Calories
- Cholesterol
- A general avoidance of processed foods or ingredients that are too long to be read or a predisposition towards buying fresh food, fruits and vegetables.
- Carbohydrate
- Omega-3's
- Protein
- Fiber

Whole grains – including more than just the “whole grain” trend or banner that is found on cereals.

Vitamins and minerals, particularly iron and calcium were mentioned as well in the English groups. These tended to be mentioned by individuals for very specific needs. However, participants mentioned that they generally do not have much information about vitamins and minerals – they are unaware of their health benefits, and they are unaware of how much vitamins and minerals they should be consuming.

While the non-regular users were able to identify the above nutrition needs as well, there was less stringency placed on these by some participants in these groups. For example, “lite” products would constitute an interest, or a particular food label stating “25% less...” would encourage them to purchase the product. Some indicated they would be not so likely to look beyond the “Whole Grain” symbol on a box of cereal or bread – and just knowing a product was “Whole Grain” made it nutritionally acceptable. A few indicated that their nutrition needs change regularly with certain nutritional trends, and they would zero-in on that piece of information on the package and not look further. For example, one participant in the Toronto non-regular user group indicated “Right now, fibre is the big thing for us, so I go out and look for products with fibre in them.” Similarly, some accept the Health Check symbol as something that would get them to purchase a food, with one Montreal participant saying:

I look for labels that have the Health Check symbol on it... especially because I don't cook as much anymore. I used to cook three times a day all the time, but now I've just had it... So that being said, I prefer to at least buy products that have a check mark on it of some sort to tell me it's a healthy selection because I don't have time to read ingredient lists and all that.

Participants Receive Nutrition Information From Many Sources.

After discussing their basic nutrition requirements, participants were asked to indicate where they receive nutrition information in general. In most of the groups, information on food packages, including claims, ingredients and the Nutrition Facts table was mentioned first and identified as one of the most important sources. This information is a direct indication of what is in a particular food and directly assists with purchase decisions. Given that these pieces of information would be probed in much more detail in the groups, the moderators focused on gathering other sources of nutrition information besides what is on the package. These include:

- Internet searches for particular terms
- School – some adults had taken nutrition courses and for those with children, they find what their children are learning to be very useful for them
- Friends discuss the products they are purchasing
- Health care workers – doctors and nutritionists are mentioned specifically
- Media – focus on local newscasts or newspapers with specific nutrition information. In Montreal, a TV show called L'épicerie was mentioned frequently. In the English groups, participants had a difficult time naming specific shows or segments.
- Books on current nutrition topics like “Top 10 Cancer Fighting Foods” or on the topic of the Glycemic Index.
- Recipe books
- Commercials that mention nutrition information
- Magazines such as People, The Economist, Good Housekeeping, Men's Health. Participants had difficulty identifying specific magazines.
- In Vancouver, “Dial-A-Dietician” was mentioned as a specific service.
- Flyers, at-home deliveries of samples, in-store samples and in-store information. In Vancouver, a health food store named Choices was mentioned as being particularly strong on in-store information.

Participants Find Nutrition Information On Pre-Packaged Food To Be Very Useful.

After discussing general sources of nutrition information, the moderators focused attention on opinions towards information on pre-packaged food. As mentioned earlier, participants generally identified this information as being a key source of information for them. Participants had the following opinions about nutrition information on pre-packaged food:

- Claims on the Principal Display Panel (PDP), or front of the package do attract attention. Participants in the regular user groups indicated that these claims were simply a cause for “further investigation” – causing them to look more closely at other information on the package. Some non-regular users indicated that claims like “lite” would be enough for them to choose a particular product.
- When participants were asked in general about information on pre-packaged food being confusing in any way, in general participants in both types of user groups say that there is nothing confusing about the information that appears on nutrition labels. The exception was Montreal non-regular users – they indicated that the Nutrition Facts table was a little vague, stating the percentages were confusing, or that they only used a fraction of the information available to them on the table. It is very important to note that even though many participants – at this initial and early stage of the groups - said that they did not have any issues or questions about nutrition information on the packages, further probing and discussion indicated that there was a fair amount of misunderstanding of the %DV on the Nutrition Facts table and how the Nutrition Facts table could be used to evaluate the daily intake of nutrients and compare foods.
- Those in the Toronto and the Montreal regular user groups rely most on the Nutrition Facts table for information. There was a strong consensus that after all sources of information were discussed, the table provides enough detail and information for them to make informed choices based on the break-out of nutrients and based on the measurements provided. Even those in Montreal who did not understand it felt that it was most useful.
- In Vancouver, the list of ingredients proved to be the piece of information most relied on. The Montreal non-regular user groups relied equally in the list of ingredients and Nutrition Facts table. Unprompted, participants knew that the list was ordered by weight, they were fairly knowledgeable and confident in interpreting various ingredients. Moreover, they indicated statements like “if sugar is in the top three ingredients, I just won’t buy it, regardless of what other information may appear on the package.” They knew different names for sugars and salts and avoided ingredients lists where there were too many unknown names.

Finally, it is important to note that many participants said that they look at multiple sources of information on the package. While there were preferred sources of information, or information that is perceived as being more useful, there was a recognition, especially among the regular user groups, that no one source of information could tell someone everything they need to know about the nutritional content of pre-packaged food.

Non-Regular Users Identified Reasons For Not Using Nutrition Information More Frequently.

As identified above, some non-regular users are less stringent in general about their nutrition requirements and they do not look at the package in as much detail as a result. However, there

are other more detailed reasons for non-regular use of nutrition information on pre-packaged food. These include:

- The time and effort involved in using nutrition information. This was the main reason for not using nutrition information on pre-packaged food more often in the Montreal groups. A few older participants in the Vancouver non-regular user groups also mentioned this.
- Some participants mentioned that nutrition information would only be of interest if they actually had a certain condition to manage or deal with. They did not see information on pre-packaged food as preventative.
- Some participants in the non-regular users groups do not use nutrition information on pre-packaged food because they do not eat pre-packaged food. They tend to eat fresh fruit, vegetables, meat and grain products. These are considered healthy choices without the need to look for additional information. One participant in the non-regular user group said “I look at the nutrition labels to see the dis-nutrition I’m getting when I eat the product.” That is, they eat packaged food knowing that it is not healthy for them, and just want to see what they are ingesting.
- Some focus only on a very small portion of nutrition information – like fibre only. These participants in the non-regular groups tend to know that they eat healthy, or that they have “good genes” and they will only focus on specific information that they feel is essential for them. One participant in the Toronto group indicated that she is just generally healthy, but looks for calcium on products so that when she gets older she “won’t fall and break a hip.”

Finally, it is important to note that the above reasons were only cited by a few participants in each of the non-regular user groups. With the exception of lack of time in Montreal, there did not appear to be a consistent reason for less than regular use among all the participants in the non-regular user groups.

The Product Review Illustrated How Participants Use Nutrition Information On Pre-Packaged Food Labels

Participants were given various pre-packaged food packages to look at. They were asked to engage in a number of exercises. The first exercise was to indicate what they would normally look at on a food package, and discuss it. The following are the key observations:

- Many would look at claims or other information on the Principal Display Panel (PDP) as a first look. Typically, this would not tell them too much about the product, with the exception of some participants in the non-regular users group who say that they would have purchased based on some claims like “high in fibre”, “Whole Grain” or “low in sodium”. Most of the other observations were related to how they would investigate the product further. For example, in a cereal that would have a claim like “high in potassium” or “Whole Grain”, they would often look at the ingredients or the Nutrition Facts table to see how much sugar or other “bad stuff” may be in there. When looking at a sweet cereal primarily marketed to children, for example, one participant said “The whole grain may be good for you but the marshmallows will kill you.” The general attitude towards the claims seemed to be that claims are an attempt to prove the product

is healthy, and people would be looking at other parts of the label to prove otherwise. The scepticism that was raised by claims would prompt further investigation of the label.

- Some participants looked at calories per serving to gauge opinion towards the food. While participants did not mention a specific amount of calories they needed per day, they seemed to have rough ideas about what is too much per serving – one participant commented “230 calories for a cup of cereal is very high!”
- In Toronto and Vancouver, the reference amount on the table was another item that people would normally look at, and it was summed-up by one participant who said “OK – let’s see what I’m going to be getting for my 35 gram granola bar.” The issue came up, however, that serving sizes are very inconsistent. Even on the two or three boxes of cereal that were handed out, in a few groups, participants starting asking each other what the serving size was on one cereal compared to another, only to find they had different volume amounts. This was described as being confusing and frustrating.
- General items under the Nutrition Facts were also looked at first. Some knew exactly what they were looking for – like a specific vitamin, mineral or nutrient – usually sugar or fibre under the carbohydrate listing. What was interesting was that in some cases, and this occurred in both user groups, participants were not clear on how to put the information together on the Nutrition Facts table to form a full picture. When probed on what they normally look at on the Nutrition Facts table first, they would start reading what they would look for, but there was a sense that they did not really understand the meaning behind what they were saying. They would state something like “It has 30% fat” or “It contains 30% of my fat intake for the day”, but would not say much more than that.
- In Vancouver, some participants immediately went to the list of ingredients and demonstrated that they had a very good knowledge of how to use that particular piece of information. In one case, on a cereal, a participant pointed out that three of the top five ingredients were different forms of sugars.

Afterwards, participants were asked to look at other information and identify what they would notice in general:

- Participants questioned the %DV. While some claimed to know what it was, it was not uncommon to hear a question like “why doesn’t this add to 100%”, or “on whom are they basing the %DV?”
- Some participants in the Toronto and Vancouver groups made the general comment that when something, like yogurt, is “low fat”, there is usually another element that is put-in to make the product taste good, and that has negative implications for the nutritional value of the product.
- The Heart Check Symbols and the manufacturer’s healthy-logos/statements were elements that tended to be noticed on a secondary basis.

The Product Review Also Indicated A Lack Of Confidence In Many Nutrition Statements On The Label

Participants were asked if there was anything missing on the labels or if any of the items may have caused confusion. While some of those items were discussed in their initial observations, what became clear was that there was a lack of confidence – to the point of mild distrust - of much of the information on the labels. This came out in a number of ways:

- Participants did not trust much of the worded statements on the packaging – including Health Canada’s health claims. Statements like this were referred to as “fluffy” by one Vancouver participant, and others in the group agreed with the sentiment. At this time in the groups, participants were not aware that these statements were regulated by Health Canada.
- Product statements put on by the manufacturer were also viewed with scepticism. When commenting on claims put on the package, one participant in Montreal said “they only put on what they want you to see... it’s from their point of view.”
- The manufacturer’s attempts at stamping their products as healthy were not seen as effective. In many groups participants were somewhat angered and said “Who says this is a ‘Sensible Select’ product?”
- Though participants knew the list of ingredients and the Nutrition Facts tables had some sort of regulation behind them, there are a fair number of concerns. For example, some participants felt that marketing terms like “specially selected potatoes” or “golden syrup” were slipping into the list of ingredients, and if that was the case, then it would be difficult to trust them. Some felt that manufacturers could control what was listed on the Nutrition Facts table. While there was some sense of regulation, participants were not sure what it was, who did it and how often products were monitored.
- One participant pointed to a label that said “no artificial colours or flavours added”, but then looked further and found that “natural colours and flavours were added”. The participant got upset at this kind of practice, where manufacturers engage in what is perceived to be contradictory and confusing labelling practices.

The Nutrition Facts Table Is Not Used To Its Fullest Potential To Compare One Product To Another

Participants were asked how they compare one food to another, in order to see if they use the %DV on Nutrition Facts to do so. Virtually all participants, when asked this question, did not use the %DV to do so. At first, participants started talking about comparing products based on brand and price saying things like “you get what you pay for”. But when asked about using nutrition information on the package, they indicated that they tend to use the claims on the front of the box (0 trans fat, low in sodium, high in fibre). What is interesting to note though is that for the claims of “low in”, “high in” or “good source of”, participants at this point in the group generally did not know that those were regulated by the government and that they correspond to particular measurements or weight requirements in the food or serving.

Some will use the list of ingredients, particularly in Vancouver. Others knew to go to the Nutrition Facts table, but they began to look at the quantity of a nutrient in a food (in grams, for example), as opposed to using the %DV. Also, only some knew, without prompting, that they would have to adjust the amounts proportionately based on the reference amount at the top of the Nutrition Facts table.

Overall, there were very few participants that were confident and knew directly how to compare one food to another using the %DV.

There Is Virtually No Use Of Nutrition Information At Home

Participants rarely use nutrition information when they return home to plan serving sizes or to actually calculate how much of a food they should eat in order to meet their nutrition requirements.

Participants Have A Good Understanding Of Trans Fats

Participants were asked to indicate their understanding of trans fats in pre-packaged food. In all groups, most participants seemed to understand that trans fats are by-products of hydrogenation and that hydrogenation is used to solidify certain oils to make them solid and improve shelf life. They understand that trans fats clog arteries and are not considered to be healthy at all. Participants also realize that a “0 trans fat” claim does not make a food healthy. While they did not directly look at the amount of saturated fat in the product, they would evaluate it as they would any other – looking things like sugar, salt and preservative content.

2. PRINCIPAL DISPLAY PANEL CLAIMS

Participants were shown various claims and symbols used on the Principal Display Panels of pre-packaged food. The goal was to understand how they are used, and how participants interpret the claims themselves and decisions that participants make using the claims.

Health Claims

Participants were shown a claim that said:

High Potassium. Low Sodium. A healthy diet containing foods high in potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a risk factor for stroke and heart disease. [This cereal] is high in potassium and low in sodium.

For the most part, participants had not been aware of claims made like this on products. If any, only one or two in each group had recalled claims like this when shopping (reference was made to Cheerios lowering cholesterol), and they had not been seen to any significant extent. With the claim used in these focus groups, many participants mentioned they did not notice the claim because it was printed in very small print on the bottom of the PDP (just above the box fold on the bottom), and on the side mixed-in with other information.

Overall, this statement would not persuade or dissuade someone from purchasing the product. Rather, people would use this information in combination with other factors on the food package. In fact, some speculated that the amount of sugar and fat contained in the product would offset any claimed cardiac benefit.

While there was no questioning of the actual link between the minerals and the health outcome, there were many concerns raised about the details. For example:

- How much potassium and how little sodium is needed to obtain the benefit?
- Is this product to be taken once a day, once a week, three times a day and in what quantity in order to benefit the participant?
- How does this information relate to a person's individual health situation? Does it differ based on gender, age, previous history, family history, etc...
- The fact that the claim is not definite and that the word "may" is used makes people unsure of the validity of the claim.
- This would only be of use to people who have heart disease
- "It would cause me to check it out... I would go onto the internet and find out more information about what I should be eating."

Overall, participants said that they would need more information than this to make a decision about purchasing this product, and they would need more information to know whether the product would actually be healthy for their hearts. Trust in this is quite low – it is seen as part of the product's marketing strategy, and participants feel that marketing messages about health are not very trustworthy. Virtually no one knew that Health Canada had any input or regulation over claims like this.

Nutrition Claims

Participants were shown “low fat yogurt” and “low in fat and saturated fat” on a jar of tomato sauce. Nutrient content claims are some of the more noticed nutrition messages on the PDP, and this sentiment was stronger in the English language groups compared to the French groups in Montreal. During the actual product review in the previous section, these specific claims were not noticed as much as other claims, and it likely had to do with positioning on the package as opposed to lack of interest in the message. Other claims on other packages were noticed during the product review.

Interestingly, these claims are not trusted too much, and as such their use in actually deciding whether or not to choose a product is low. More specifically, these claims are only used to the extent that they would get someone to investigate further nutrition information (usually the Nutrition Facts Table) on the package or get someone to compare two products together to determine which one may be lower or higher in the particular nutrient of interest. Those in the non-regular user group would be more likely not to investigate the information further and just purchase the product based on the claim, one person in this group saying “I buy what my wife tells me, and anything lite is good. It’s got to be the lite mayonnaise.” In fact participants do think that there is some standard to designate whether a product is low, high or lite in a nutrient, but they do not know those numbers and this contributes to the overall lack of trust in the claims. While all groups wanted to know these numbers and standards, those in Montreal were particularly interested in knowing the values behind these statements.

Related to this is the fact that participants consider claims like “low in fat” and “62% less fat than our regular product” to be the same thing, not knowing that the “low in fat” claim can only be used if the product meets certain Health Canada guidelines.

In the English groups, participants often said that something that is low in one element (say sugar) is usually high in another element (like fat) so that the product can still taste good.

Some participants understand the fact that manufacturers cannot provide a Nutrition Claim on a product if the product never contained that ingredient to begin with. For example, a cola product cannot claim to be cholesterol free, as the product does not tend to have cholesterol in it anyhow.

HSF Health Check Logo

Participants were shown two products with a HSF “Health Check” logo on them. Overall, participants do tend to notice this logo when they shop and during the product review and it has some use in product purchases. Most, but not all, knew it was the Heart and Stroke Seal Of Approval – some in Montreal initially felt it was a Health Canada seal of approval. Overall, Montreal participants were less familiar with this logo than their Anglophone counterparts. When participants were asked what the logo meant to them, they indicated that it was a “seal of approval” – the concept of a “seal of approval” seems positive to people – according to some organization or standard, the product has met a certain set of standards.

There were other positive sentiments towards the logo. After probing, those aware of the logo in Montreal indicated that it was one of the first logos to come out to “approve” a product. Some participants across all the groups in all the cities said they would use the symbol as a way of choosing a food without doing too much more investigation into other nutritional claims on the

package. Few other claims had this level of trust – even if it was only from a very small number of participants.

However, it is important to know that there were some in each group that felt the manufacturer actually paid the HSF to use the logo, thereby making it a marketing gimmick. What is interesting is that this idea caught-on among people who were not aware of this opinion – that is, whether or not it is actually true, people can be persuaded to believe that manufacturers pay for the use of the HSF logo, and that reduces the credibility of the logo and of the manufacturers, who are perceived as using it to simply sell more of their product. This sentiment was expressed more strongly in Montreal than in other groups mainly because participants were less familiar with the logo and read the matching explanation on the packaging. The wording “Unilever Canada appuie financièrement le programme éducatif Visez Santé” reinforced participants scepticism towards the logo's integrity.

Whole Grain Banner

Participants were shown two cereals with a large “Whole Grain” banner across the top of the package. Overall, there were some participants who had noticed this while shopping. There are split opinions about the use, meaning and effectiveness of the banner. The main sentiment is that it is a marketing ploy to get people to buy the product. Participants who think this way feel that while whole grain may be healthier for people, the amount of sugar and other non-nutritious elements in cereal negates any sort of benefits. They also tend to know that whole grain means that more of the grain is used in the making of the product, and that the extra grain provides more nutrition.

However, there were some participants, across both types of user groups who indicated they would consider products with the whole grain label on them – and that they would chose a product with a whole grain logo on it over one that did not have such a logo. These users however indicated that they would look at other ingredients as well, but they felt that the whole grain claim provided enough benefits to consider the product. There were a few in the English non-regular user groups who said that they would choose whole grain products to an almost “carte-blanche” extent. That is they would purchase the product without looking too much further into the nutritional value of it. These individuals in the non-regular user group also did not know much about the reasons why whole grains were considered to be a healthier choice.

One issue that came up in many groups is who is putting the label on the product. Most felt that it was a manufacturer logo (as opposed to the HSF symbol previously discussed in the groups), and this had the effect of making it seem less credible. This sentiment was captured in the Montreal non-regular user group. Some said they felt the label was placed there by a manufacturer because the whole grain could not be seen in the product, and to top it off, the entire product was then dipped in sugar. The following exchange illustrates this:

- *It means it's better for your health because the grains are whole.*
- *It just means its been processed less*
- *But on a box of [this cereal], it's a joke, let's face it.*

Manufacturer Claims

Participants were shown two products that had manufacturer “seals of approval” or “stamp” on them which suggested that the product was nutritious in some sort of way. Showing these to participants seemed to illicit anger and indignation... “According to whom?” was often what was

said when participants saw these statements. Participants pretty much knew that these were manufacturer logos that were trying to get people to purchase the product. The feeling was stronger in the regular user groups and less so in the non-regular user groups. A few in the Toronto non-regular group said that they would consider the information contained in these manufacturer claims as all the information they need to make a nutritional decision about the product. In the case of the bag of potato chips that had the logo on it, some participants said it would sway them to buy that particular brand of chips – if they are ingesting something that is not healthy for them, they might as well and try and make it a bit healthier if possible. However, participants recognize that when they are going for a junk food such as chips, taste and experience of the product is paramount, so some would purchase regular chips, and others would attempt the chips with the claim on it. However, if the chips did not taste good, they would not be purchased again.

What did come up at least once in each city is that Blue Menu – a new line of products from Loblaws - receives more credibility than manufacturer claims put on existing products. Some participants felt that the Blue Menu was an entirely healthy line of food, so that anything within it was considered to be healthier. While the Blue Menu claims may be exactly the same as the ones made by the manufacturers on their own products, the other products are hampered by the fact that they have existing brand names associated with them, and some of those brand names or products may not have been associated with healthy products before the manufacturer's claim came on them.

3. Focus On Nutrition Facts Table

Participants were shown two Nutrition Facts tables (included in the appendix) and discussed their use and understanding of the information on them.

The Nutrition Facts Table Is Perceived To Be A Very Important Piece Of Information On Pre-Packaged Food

During the early part of the focus groups when participants were asked about general sources of nutrition information on an unaided basis, they mentioned the importance and frequent use of the Nutrition Facts table in providing them with useful information about nutrition. In general the table is one of the pieces of information that is almost always consulted when participants evaluate the nutritional value of a food. It may not be the first piece of information consulted because claims on the PDP are more easily spotted. Those in Toronto had a particularly strong affinity to the table compared to those in Vancouver (in that market, the affinity is towards the list of ingredients). Those regular users in Montreal also trusted the Nutrition Facts table more than other sources of information and found it to be the most useful piece of information on the package.

Of note, the most commonly referenced elements seem to be:

- Carbohydrate, with a focus on sugars, and to a lesser extent fibre
- Fat – though participants are aware of trans fat, there are some not so familiar with other types of fat
- Calcium as it relates to osteoporosis
- Iron

There Is General Trust In The Nutrition Facts Table, And Many Have A Vague Sense That There Is Some Regulation Behind It

Overall, there is a fair amount of trust in the Nutrition Facts table and some participants in each group mentioned that it was mandatory on pre-packaged food. Others had some idea that Health Canada regulates and monitors the accuracy. Participants generally could not confidently or concretely identify why they felt Health Canada regulated it – they just knew. Some felt that the very standardized presentation (the same size, font, black and white scheme) gave a sense of regulation.

Despite Frequent Use And Perceived Trust, Many Participants Are Not Engaged By The Table And Would Like To Understand It Better.

While participants place a lot of value on the information contained in the Nutrition Facts table, the research demonstrated that many participants are also somewhat unclear about the information contained in it. It is instructive to analyze the participant's initial unaided comments about the Nutrition Facts table. Some said:

- *I check the white grid on the box*
- *I look for carbohydrates*
- *I see the percentage of fat a serving contains*
- *It's all there – everything you need to know is on the table*

What can be seen is that there is awareness of the table, and some of the information it contains. However, there is confusion, as seen by the third bullet point about the percentage of fat a serving contains. People do not have specific values or requirements for nutrients listed on the Nutrition Facts table, and they are not initially forthcoming with details on how they would use or interpret the information they are looking at. It is only when probed (and in some cases extensively so) that participants were able to indicate how they would use the Nutrition Facts table to make nutrition decisions for themselves. Participants are aware of the table and the information it contains – they are not so familiar with using it to make decisions.

Participants were also asked whether they use the Nutrition Facts table at home to plan serving sizes, and most participants said that they did not use it for this purpose. Along the same lines, participants were asked how they compare one food to another. For the most part, using the Nutrition Facts table is not the main way participants compared foods. When asked open-ended and unprompted questions about how they compare the nutritional value of one food to another, some said they use claims, others rely on the brand and list of ingredients. There were definitely some participants who said that they use the Nutrition Facts table, but it was not a very natural answer – only a few participants were accustomed to doing this, and only a few confidently knew that they would use the %DV to compare foods. Many more individuals when asked about how they would compare the nutritional content of food using the Nutrition Facts table said that they would use the actual quantity of a nutrient in the serving size, and some seemed puzzled when asked how they would account for different serving sizes on which the measurement was based. On top of this, participants do not necessarily know how much (or little) of a nutrient would meet their requirement, so using the actual quantity of a nutrient has little meaning for them.

There Are Other Points Of Confusion Concerning The Table And %DV.

There is confusion concerning the %DV that occurs across all the user groups. That is, regular users and non-regular users are just as likely to have issues with interpreting the %DV. In most of the groups, there were at least a few participants who felt that the %DV referred to the actual percentage of a nutrient in a total serving – meaning that the %DV on the Nutrition Facts table should always sum to 100%. Some participants mentioned this as a point of confusion for them when looking at the table.

In all cases, where there were some participants confused by this, the groups were able to “self-correct”. That is, someone within the group would provide an explanation of how %DV actually works and participants would understand this element of the table. What is interesting is that even among those who understand %DV, there is still a bit of hesitation concerning the explanation – even those who understand it are not fully confident in explaining the concept of %DV.

Once the concept was understood, there were other issues about %DV and about the table itself – many relate to the vitamin and mineral section:

- Participants wonder how, and for whom, the %DV is calculated. The consensus in many groups seemed to be that Health Canada does the calculation (one or two groups mentioned a link to Canada’s Food Guide) for the average person. This caused some discussion about the fact that each person is different, and if that is the case, then some begin to question the usefulness of the %DV to them and their particular nutritional situation.

In Montreal, participants suggested indicating the actual DV quantity (in grams or milligrams) to aid understanding and then this would improve the usage of the table, as it would be both understandable and user friendly.

- There was confusion about which vitamins and minerals should appear on the Nutrition Facts table. Some looked at a box of cereal and wondered why there was such a long list compared to what appeared on other products. Some wondered why many Nutrition Facts tables listed a vitamin or mineral with 0% beside it. While this was not confusing in and of itself, it did cause a lack of trust in the Nutrition Facts table.
- Also as it relates to vitamins and minerals, some were concerned that there was no weight or measurement beside the percentage. A few did not know how they would be able to use the Nutrition Facts table to tell how much Vitamin C, for example, they should be ingesting. That is, there were a few, primarily in the non-regular user groups, who could not realize that all they had to do was consume foods in portion sizes that total 100% of the daily requirement for Vitamin C.
- Participants also indicated that they did not know the benefits of vitamins and minerals, so the information contained in these sections did not have as much value to them as it could.
- There were some participants who were confused by the fact that the item break-out under the Fat and Carbohydrate categories did not sum to the total for these elements. This confusion has the affect of less use among some participants particularly in Montreal.
- The reference amount of food (commonly referred to as a Serving Size in the English groups) is well-understood and noticed in Toronto and Vancouver. In the French groups, participants were referring to the amount they would consume, as opposed to the reference amount on the table. Once all groups were made aware of how the reference amount works, there was concern about non-standard serving sizes within the same category of food. They do not expect a burger and chips to have the same serving size, but they do wonder why the two cereals used as examples in the groups had different serving sizes. According to participants, this represents one of the single largest barriers to use of nutrition information on packaged food.

To the point above, participants are quite adept at adjusting the measurements and %DV associated with particular nutrients based on a change in the amount of food referenced in the Nutrition Facts table. What is interesting to note is that in the non-regular user groups, some participants mentioned that it took too long to crunch numbers like this. A more general comment made by non-regular users is that the Nutrition Facts table would be used by people who already have medical conditions that are issues. That is, there is a feeling that the Nutrition Facts table is “reactive” as opposed to being “preventative”.

There Are Some Examples And Phrases That Stand-Out About The Nutrition Facts Table

Participants were asked for examples of their use of the Nutrition Facts table (they were even prompted about comparing food or using it at home), and for the most part, the examples given were in-store decisions that were made about purchasing a specific product. For the most part, participants would look at the weight of a particular nutrient in a serving and choose based on

that. Some participants with particular medical conditions, or needs for specific minerals would look and choose based on the presence of those nutrients. A few diabetics would look at how much of the carbohydrate content is sugars – and some diabetics in the groups understood the concept of the glycemic index and they recognized that this type of information is not on the table.

There was one example that stood out as an interesting use of the Nutrition Facts table. A participant said her friend would allow her children to choose a cereal that had at least three grams of fibre in it based on the Nutrition Facts table – with the friend thinking that fibre content would make the cereal nutritious. When the participant heard the types of cereal being selected by the children, she questioned the choices, and examined the Nutrition Facts table herself, finding that while there may have been three grams of fibre there was a very high sugar content, which would not make the choice healthy for her or her children.

Another participant, when asked to look at and describe the thoughts he had while looking at the Nutrition Facts table used the following phrase – “Let’s see exactly what I’m getting for my 35 gram granola bar”. He then went through and began making judgments about the nutritional value based on the Nutrition Facts, particularly focusing on carbohydrate, sugars, fibre, vitamins and minerals.

4. List Of Ingredients

Participants were shown a sample list of ingredients from three possible selections.

Participants Use The List Of Ingredients To Make Food Choices.

Participants indicate that they use the list of ingredients often when evaluating the nutritional aspects of pre-packaged food. Participants in both Vancouver groups had more affinity towards the list of ingredients compared to all other information on the package, including claims and the Nutrition Facts table – in fact they cited it as the most important and useful piece of information on pre-packaged food. They indicated, as did participants in other groups, that the list itemizes all the ingredients in a pre-packaged food by weight. Those in Vancouver, and to a lesser extent in the other two markets, were able to go through the list and make judgments about a product. One person in Vancouver said “I just saw a lemon cream pie – and guess what, when I looked at the ingredients, there was no lemon and no cream... it was all chemicals.”

The one issue participants had was with the chemical names on the list. As a general rule, if the list contained too many chemicals or if chemical sounding names were too high on the list, they would not purchase the product. Also related to chemical names, participants did not know exactly what the chemical sounding names actually were. Some guessed that they may be preservatives, colouring.

Using the list of ingredients to determine if there is something in a food that would cause an allergic reaction for a participant or a family member is stated as another important use of the information on the ingredient list.

Participants Understand The List Is Ordered Based On Weight – Some Use This To Make Product Choices.

There were some in each of the groups who indicated that they would use the list of ingredients to check the weight of an ingredient, without going to the Nutrition Facts table. Some participants cited general rules that they had like “if sugar is in the top 3 ingredients I won’t buy it”, or as was said by a participant in Montreal non-regular user group “I use it to decide between two similar products. I look to see which has less fat or sugar and that’s what I choose.”

Some use the list of ingredients to check their expectations of what should be in the product. The lemon pie quote above is one such example. Some participants when shown the chicken soup ingredient list, for example, would look to see how close water, chicken and noodles are to the top of the ingredient list in order to decide. Some participants indicated that they would see a product like this, but the ingredients they would expect to find at or near the top would be somewhere in the middle and they would not purchase it. Sugars in cereals is another example, where it should not be too high on the list in order for a product to be purchased. This was pointed-out when looking at the example list of ingredients given out for a cereal.

It seemed that once participants had made up their mind about the weight of certain ingredients based on looking at the list of ingredients, they would not use the Nutrition Facts table if the list of ingredients did not meet their standards. However, they would check the Nutrition Facts table once a decision had been made to consider buying the product after looking at the ingredient list. The exception was in the Montreal regular user group, where participants would look at both the list of ingredients and the Nutrition Facts table.

There Is Some Trust In The List Of Ingredients.

Participants indicated that they trusted the list of ingredients. While it was not a resounding trust in the list, participants do feel that manufacturers are being honest in listing the ingredients. Some participants feel that the manufacturers themselves are responsible for regulating their own list of ingredients, others get a sense that Health Canada may do it, but there is no definitive answer either way.

What does concern some participants in terms of trust is that some marketing terms seem to be appearing in some of the ingredient lists they saw in the group. Terms like “specially selected potatoes”, “fresh egg noodles” or “golden syrup” were considered terms designed to make certain ingredients look better than they actually were.

Also, some participants in Vancouver, where there is stronger attachment to the list, seemed to feel that manufacturers change the names of the chemicals used in the list so that if a certain chemical was identified as being a health concern, they would change it to another name that would be different, yet still a scientifically accurate description of the chemical ingredient.

5. Communications Points & Issues

One of the main objectives of the study was to determine key messages about nutrition labelling and how those messages could be communicated through marketing messages. Participants were asked about what would get them to use nutrition labelling more often, what new information they learned about nutrition labelling and where they get information about nutrition labelling.

There Are A Number Of Reasons Why Participants Do Not Use Nutrition Labelling More Often

Participants were asked to indicate why they are not using nutrition labelling more often. One of the key reasons seems to be a lack of nutrition knowledge to understand the information provided. Those in the Montreal non-regular user group were more direct at stating that they did not understand some of the information on the labels, but in other groups it was clear that participants did not understand some of the information on the labels. The previous sections in this report highlight the areas that cause the confusion and misunderstanding, but the result is frustration with the labels and some scepticism about the information on them. Participants want the information to be easy to use and understand, and if that can be the case, then they want explanations as to why information is displayed the way it is (with perhaps a focus on clearing up what participants perceive to be inconsistencies or confusing presentation), and how to make sense of it. To that point, participants in Montreal indicated that they want one simple logo or stamp that marks a food in a very simple way such as a Health Canada seal of approval.

It appears as if participants just pull the information that they perceive they need and understand off the labels and do not really focus on the rest. In fact one of the key differences between the regular and non-regular user groups is simply the amount of information that is pulled off the package. Non-regular users tend to pull off only one or two pieces of information, and regular users pull off more information and are better able to relate different pieces of information together in order to make purchase decisions. In fact those in the non-regular user groups feel that the information is only useful to manage, as opposed to prevent, certain health conditions, explaining why some in the group do not use the information at all. However, both groups recognize that in order to use the labels in a thorough and diligent way requires a significant investment in time – both in using the labels themselves and in trying to fill-in information gaps that participants may have about nutrition and about information on the labels that they do not understand.

This requires a high level of interest and motivation to understand what all the information on the label is really saying about the product and about nutrition in general, and that motivation seems to be lacking among both types of user groups. For example, one participant in the Vancouver regular users group said “I think the question we really have to ask ourselves here is who cares about all this information?” Another said “You spend so much time, effort and care putting this information on the side of the box, but I don’t know what it means to me. So many people don’t understand what a different type of fat is... I don’t know anyone else that researches the internet the way I do.” Only some in Montreal indicated that they have looked for nutrition information previously, and then somewhat jokingly indicated that the sources they have found “talk about it [food labels] and demystify it. Of course, we seem to not have understood everything, but maybe that just means they need to talk about it more.”

While participants are willing to educate themselves about nutrition in general, they do not seem to be willing to find-out information directly as it relates to nutrition labelling. Very few had indicated that they had ever directly looked for nutrition labelling information, and participants could not confidently identify sources of nutrition labelling information.

There Are A Number Of Ways To Create Interest And Increase Use

Participants did indicate that there were ways interest could be created in using labels more and their interest could be piqued to find and take-in more information about food labelling:

- Some English language participants suggested using “Body Break” type marketing with the key goal of tying a particular nutritional outcome or benefit to the information on the labels to create interest. Participants repeatedly indicated that they wanted to know how the information related to them and what the actual benefits of the information were to their overall health and the health of their families.
- In-store tear sheets were another idea – some participants in Vancouver mentioned Choices Market as a store that has exactly this, including information that tells customers how to read food labels. The point made by some participants, and those aware of what Choice Market does is that the in-store information must present more than basic information about how to use the labels – they have to provide a benefit which creates interest in reading the information and using the label.
- Another way to create interest is through improving general knowledge of nutrition information. This includes what vitamins and minerals do, knowledge of different types of carbohydrate and other details in the Nutrition Facts table and ingredient list – more generally participants in Vancouver indicated they wanted to know more nutrition information that corresponds to what is on labels. Also, knowing about what vitamins and minerals do creates an interest in the non-regular users as well. The research indicates that there will be some who never will use nutrition labels – but there are those who can be affected if they knew more nutrition information. For example one non-user said something to the effect of she does not use much information except the calcium information because she is in pretty good health, but does not want to fall down and break a bone. Knowing what calcium does increased her interest in this mineral.
- Parents indicated that using labels in store with children can be difficult, and they indicate that convenience and taste are important when choosing food for their families.
- Knowing that the three types of information discussed in the groups are regulated by Health Canada is also important to increased use. Awareness of this fact is low, and when it was presented to participants, they indicated spontaneously that it is something that would increase use. It lends credibility to the labelling and reduces the thought that some statements are just marketing claims from manufacturers. It will not answer all the questions that were identified in the groups (e.g. why are only some carbohydrates listed, how come more minerals are not listed, etc...), but they would know that labels are not tools manufacturers use to pull the wool over their eyes. There would be less scepticism associated with them and thus increased use.
- Usage would be impacted if participants know why there is inconsistent serving size information used on labels, or if there could be more consistent serving size information

on packages. This reduces the amount of time participants need to interpret the information on the labels.

- In Montréal, the weekly TV broadcast of “L’épicerie” is regularly mentioned as a credible and interesting source of information about food, it reaches a large audience and could become a privileged source to educate consumers on pre-packaged food labelling.

Participants Have Some Expectations About Where To Find Information About Food Labels.

Section One of the report outlines where participants find nutrition information in general, and much of that list applies to where they would expect specific information about nutrition labelling. Other key sources would include:

- The internet – general Google searches were mentioned as opposed to specific sites.
- Any sort of standard media that contains nutrition information such as newspapers and TV newscasts. Magazines mentioned specifically include Men’s Health, Chatelaine, People, Good Housekeeping and The Economist.
- In Montreal, “L’épicerie” was described as an authority/credible/well informed/most reliable and user friendly source of information and learning.
- There is a service called Dial-A-Dietitian in Vancouver that some people use for nutrition information.
- Doctors, nurses and nutritionists directly are all viewed as good sources and health professionals that should carry information about nutrition information on pre-packaged food.
- Some participants just use general books – they will pick-up a book with a certain nutrition philosophy behind it and use the book to rate their food choices.
- Recipe books were also mentioned as sources of health information.

APPENDIX

Recruiting Screener

Health Canada Nutrition Facts Marketing - SCREENER

Recruit 12 per group

Toronto – Tuesday October 9, 2007

- 5:30: Regular Nutrition Facts Users
- 7:30: Occasional/Seldom/Non Users

Montreal – Thursday October 11, 2007

- 5:30: Regular Nutrition Facts Users
- 7:30: Occasional/Seldom/Non Users

Vancouver – Thursday, October 11, 2007

- 5:30: Regular Nutrition Facts Users
- 7:30: Occasional/Seldom/Non Users

Interviewer Name and No.: _____

COMPLETE THIS SECTION ONCE THE PERSON QUALIFIES AND AGREES TO ATTEND

Participant Name:

Participant Address:

Participant Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____

Hello. My name is _____. I am calling on behalf of NRG Research to invite people to participate in a small research discussion group. The participants will be asked to give their feedback about some initiatives Health Canada is considering to educate people about food choices. We are looking to speak with specific people during these sessions. Can I ask you some questions to see if you qualify?

[IF NEED MORE INFO] These studies are often called “Focus Groups” and are an important way of conducting PUBLIC OPINION RESEARCH. The intent of the group is to get your feelings and impressions on a particular topic – in this case food and the food choices you make as part of what you eat. They are NOT SALES MEETINGS. At no time during or after the group will anyone try to sell you anything. We are inviting you to get your input, attitudes and opinions.

Before I begin I just want to mention that participation is voluntary and all your answers will be kept confidential. The groups will take place on _____**[Insert Date& Time]**. All participants will be paid an incentive for their participation and time.

1) Gender... **[By observation]**

Male

Female

RECRUIT AN EVEN MIX OF MALES AND FEMALES

2) We are interested in people's occupations to start. Please tell me if you or any members of your immediate family currently work in, or are retired from any of the following:

- A media or news company
- An advertising agency
- A market research firm
- A public affairs company
- The Federal, Provincial or Municipal Government
- A company that manufactures food
- An occupation that is in a position to dispense nutrition advice (e.g. doctor, nurse, dietician, nutritionist, counselor, etc...)
- An occupation where you decide the type of food others would eat (e.g. chef, cook, caretaker)

IF YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE, TERMINATE

3) Do you do most of the food shopping for your household?

- Yes, respondent does most of the food shopping
- No **[ASK TO SPEAK TO SOMEONE WHO HAS RESPONSIBILITY FOR FOOD PURCHASES]**

4a) Continue to think about your food shopping. When purchasing a prepackaged food for the first time, how often do you look at the white Nutrition Facts table on the package? Do you look at it...

- Regularly **Recruit 12 for 5:30 group**
- Occasionally **Recruit 4 for 7:30 group**
- Seldom **Recruit 4 for 7:30 group**
- Never **Recruit 4 for 7:30 group**

4b) When you shop for food for yourself, what role do nutrition and health considerations play in your choices? Use a 1 to 10 scale to tell me, where 10 means nutrition and health considerations play a large role in your choices and a 1 means nutrition and health play no role at all.

No role at all							Large Role		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Terminate If 1, 2 or 3 above

5a) In which of the following age categories do you belong?

Under 18 **Terminate**

18 – 24

25 – 34

35 – 44

RECRUIT A GOOD MIX OF AGES

54 – 54

55 – 64

65 and over

5b) Do you have children aged 2-12 for whom you shop for food?

Yes **Recruit between 6-8**

No **Recruit between 4-6**

6) What is the highest level of education you have obtained? Is it... **[Recruit a good mix]**

Less than high school

High school graduate

Some college

College graduate

Some university

University graduate

Post-graduate work

7) In what range does your total household income fall before taxes? **[Recruit a good mix]**

Less than \$20,000

\$20,000 - \$34,999

\$35,000 - \$49,999

\$50,000 - \$74,999

\$75,000 - \$99,999

\$100,000 or more

8) As I mentioned earlier you are being invited to a group discussion with approximately 10 other people. How comfortable are you in participating and speaking out in group discussions of this size?

Very Comfortable

Somewhat Comfortable

Not very comfortable **[THANK AND TERMINATE]**

Not at all Comfortable **[THANK AND TERMINATE]**

Don't know **[THANK AND TERMINATE]**

9). Have you ever attended a discussion or focus group?

Yes
No [**Skip to Q 10**]

If yes, how long ago? _____ [**TERMINATE IF LESS THAN SIX MONTHS**]

If yes, how many have you attended in the past five years? _____ [**TERMINATE IF MORE THAN FIVE**]

If yes, what was the topic(s) of that focus group(s) _____
[**TERMINATE IF TOPIC IS RELATED**]

10. You may be required to read materials in the focus group and write-out responses to questions. Is there anything that would prevent you from engaging in these activities?

Yes **TERMINATE**
No

11. Are you familiar with the concept of research discussion groups or focus groups?

Yes [**SKIP EXPLANATION OF FOCUS GROUP**]
No

The purpose is to gather the opinions of the participants on a particular subject. Participation is on a completely voluntary basis and comments made during the discussion will remain confidential. During the session, participants are asked to discuss issues related to the topic being examined and will follow a scripted line of questioning and probing of key issues.

12. Based on the answers you have provided, we would like to invite you to participate in our focus group which will last approximately **two hours** and for which you will receive **\$60** for your participation.

Are you interested in helping out by attending this research discussion group? It will be held on:

[**Regular Users**] 5:30 SHARP on _____ [**Fill-In Date**]
[**Occasional/Seldom/Non Users**] 7:30 SHARP on _____ [**Fill-In Date**]

Yes **That's great.**
No [**thank and good bye**]

[Insert location and directions]

Please arrive about 15 minutes prior to the beginning of the group. If you arrive late, we will not be able to include you in the group, and will not be able to provide you with the \$60 incentive. Also, please bring with you Photo ID of some sort so that we can confirm

your identity prior to entering the group. Also, please bring with glasses or anything else you would normally need to read and write responses during the group.

If you have any questions or are unable to attend, please call our office as soon as possible so we will have time to recruit a replacement. Our office number is _____. Thank you very much for your time and cooperation. Someone from our office will call prior to the groups to confirm your attendance.

What time of day would be good to call you the day before the group? _____
What ph. #?

We look forward to seeing you on:

[Regular Users] 5:30 SHARP on _____**[Fill-In Date]**
[Occasional/Seldom/Non Users] 7:30 SHARP on _____**[Fill-In Date]**

Santé Canada Marketing de la « Valeur Nutritive »
Recruter 12 personnes pour avoir 10 participants

Toronto – Mardi 9 octobre, 2007

- 17:30: Utilise régulièrement le tableau des valeurs nutritives
- 19:30: Utilise occasionnellement/rarement ou jamais le tableau des valeurs nutritives

Montréal – Jeudi 11 octobre, 2007

- 17:30: Utilise régulièrement le tableau des valeurs nutritives
- 19:30: Utilise occasionnellement/rarement ou jamais le tableau des valeurs nutritives

Vancouver – Jeudi 11 octobre, 2007

- 17:30: Utilise régulièrement le tableau des valeurs nutritives
- 19:30: Utilise occasionnellement/rarement ou jamais le tableau des valeurs nutritives

Nom _____ et _____ numéro _____ de l'intervieweur.:

REPLIR CETTE SECTION UNE FOIS QUE LA PERSONNE S'EST QUALIFIÉE ET QU'ELLE A ACCEPTÉ DE PARTICIPER AU GROUPE

Nom du participant: _____

Adresse : _____

Tél. du participant à la maison: _____ Au travail: _____

Bonjour. Je suis _____ d'Opinion-Impact. J'appelle pour inviter des gens à participer à des groupes de discussion. On demandera aux participants de donner leur opinion au sujet de certaines initiatives que Santé Canada envisage prendre pour éduquer les gens à propos des choix alimentaires. Nous désirons parler à des groupes de personnes bien précis durant ces sessions. Est-ce que je peux vous poser quelques questions pour vérifier si vous êtes le type de participant que nous recherchons?

[SI DEMANDE PLUS D'INFO] Ces séances de consultation sont souvent appelées « groupes de discussion », et elles sont l'une des façons importantes utilisées pour effectuer des RECHERCHES SUR L'OPINION PUBLIQUE. Le but de ces groupes est de connaître vos sentiments et vos impressions sur un sujet précis – dans ce cas-ci les aliments et les choix alimentaires que vous faites lorsque vous décidez ce que vous mangerez. Ce ne sont pas des RENCONTRES DE VENTE. Durant ces groupes, personne

n'essaiera en aucun cas de vous vendre quoique ce soit. On vous invite afin de recueillir vos opinions, impressions et attitudes.

Avant de commencer, j'aimerais vous mentionner que votre participation est totalement libre et que vous pouvez décider de participer ou non. Si vous décidez de participer, toutes vos réponses demeureront confidentielles conformément à la Loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels et les documents électroniques. Dans le rapport que nous ferons, aucun commentaire ne sera relié à un participant en particulier, les opinions exprimées seront regroupées et rapportées de façon totalement anonyme.

Les discussions auront lieu le **jeudi 11 octobre 2007 à 17h30 et 19h30** et dureront 2 heures. Chaque participant recevra un montant en argent comptant pour le remercier de sa participation et du temps qu'il nous aura consacré. Serez-vous disponible pour participer à une discussion de ce genre? Nous organisons quelques groupes, et nous devons vous poser quelques questions pour vérifier si vous êtes le type de participant que nous recherchons pour ces groupes de discussion.

1) Sexe... **[Par observation]**

- Homme
- Femme

ASSURER UNE BONNE RÉPARTITION

2) Pour commencer, nous voulons connaître l'occupation des gens. Est-ce que vous-même ou l'un des membres de votre famille immédiate travaille actuellement, ou est retraité :

- D'une entreprise dans le domaine des média
- D'une agence de publicité
- D'une entreprise ou d'un service de recherche marketing
- D'une entreprise d'affaires publiques ou de relations publiques
- D'un gouvernement que ce soit au niveau fédéral, provincial ou municipal
- Une compagnie qui fait des produits alimentaires
- D'un travail qui permet de donner des conseils en matière de nutrition (ex. : médecin, infirmier, diététiste, nutritionniste, conseiller, etc.)
- D'un travail où l'on décide ce que les autres doivent manger (ex. chef, cuisinier ou quelqu'un qui prodigue des soins)

SI « OUI » À N'IMPORTE LAQUELLE DES OPTIONS CI-DESSUS, TERMINER

3) Faites -vous la plus grande partie des achats alimentaires pour votre foyer?

- Oui, fait la plus grande partie des achats alimentaires
- Non **[SI NON DEMANDER À PARLER À LA PERSONNE QUI FAIT LA PLUS GRANDE PARTIE DES ACHATS ALIMENTAIRES POUR LE FOYER]**

4a) En continuant à penser à vos achats d'épicerie, lorsque vous achetez des produits pré-emballés pour la première fois, est-ce que vous lisez le tableau blanc sur l'emballage qui présente les valeurs nutritives : **(LIRE CHOIX)**

- Régulièrement **Recruter 12 pour le groupe de 17h30**
- Occasionnellement **Recruter 4 pour le groupe de 19h30**
- Rarement **Recruter 4 pour le groupe de 19h30**
- Jamais **Recruter 4 pour le groupe de 19h30**

4b) Lorsque vous achetez de la nourriture pour vous-même, jusqu'à quel point est-ce que la nutrition et la santé jouent un rôle dans vos choix? En utilisant une échelle de 1 à 10, où 10 signifie que la nutrition et la santé jouent un grand rôle dans vos choix et où 1 signifie que la nutrition et la santé ne jouent aucun rôle, où vous-situez vous entre 1 et 10?

Aucun rôle							Grand rôle		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Terminer si code 1, 2 ou 3 est encerclé

5a) Dans lequel des groupes d'âges suivants dois-je vous inscrire?

- Moins de 18 ans **Terminer**
- 18 – 24
- 25 – 34
- 35 – 44 **RECRUTER UNE BONNE RÉPARTITION**
- 45 – 54
- 55 – 64
- 65 ans et plus

5b) Est-ce que vous avez des enfants âgés de 2 à 12 ans pour lesquels vous faites des achats alimentaires?

Oui **Recruter entre 6-8**

Non **Recruter entre 4-6**

6) Quel est le niveau de scolarité le plus élevé que vous avez complété? Avez-vous complété...
[Recruter une bonne répartition]

Des études secondaires ou moins

Un diplôme d'études secondaires

Des études collégiales en partie

Un diplôme d'études collégiales

Des études universitaires en partie

Un diplôme universitaire de premier cycle

Des études supérieures

7) Dans quelle catégorie se situe le revenu total de votre foyer avant impôts? **[Recruter une bonne répartition]**

Moins de 20,000\$

20,000\$ - 34,999\$

35,000\$ - 49,999\$

50,000\$ - 74,999\$

75,000\$ - 99,999\$

100,000\$ et plus

8) Comme je l'ai mentionné plus tôt, vous êtes invité à participer à un groupe de discussion avec une dizaine d'autres personnes. Jusqu'à quel point êtes-vous à l'aise de participer et de vous exprimer dans le cadre d'une discussion dans un groupe de cette taille?

- Très à l'aise
- Assez à l'aise
- Pas très à l'aise **[REMERCIER ET TERMINER]**
- Pas du tout à l'aise **[REMERCIER ET TERMINER]**
- Ne sait pas **[REMERCIER ET TERMINER]**

9) Avez-vous déjà participé à un groupe de discussion?

- Oui
- Non **[Passer à la Q10]**

Si oui, il y a combien de temps? _____ **[TERMINER SI MOINS DE SIX MOIS]**

Si oui, à combien de groupes de discussion avez-vous participé au cours des cinq dernières années? _____ **[TERMINER SI PLUS DE CINQ]**

Si oui, quel était le sujet abordé dans ce ou ces groupe(s) de discussion _____ **[TERMINER SI SUJET RELIÉ]**

10) Les participants devront lire des informations et rédiger des réponses à des questions en français. Pourrez-vous le faire? Si nécessaire, apportez vos lunettes car vous en aurez besoin pour lire des documents?

- Oui **TERMINER**
- Non

11) Connaissez-vous les recherches basées sur les groupes de discussion?

- Oui **[SAUTER L'EXPLICATION SUR LES GROUPES DE DISCUSSION]**
- Non

L'objectif de ces rencontres est d'entendre les opinions des participants sur un sujet donné, Vous pouvez décider de participer ou non, et les commentaires faits durant la discussion demeureront confidentiels et anonymes. Dans le cadre de cette session, on demandera aux participants de discuter de leurs préoccupations reliées au sujet à l'étude en suivant un cadre de discussion pré-établi et en sondant des problématiques clef.

- 12) En me basant sur les réponses que vous avez données, j'aimerais vous inviter à participer à notre groupe de discussion, qui durera **environ 2 heures** et pour lequel vous recevrez **60,00\$** en remerciement de votre participation. (Pour le groupe de 17h30 : des sandwiches et des rafraîchissements seront aussi servis.)

Désirez-vous aider en participant à ce groupe de discussion? Il aura lieu le:

[Utilise régulièrement] 17h30 le 11 octobre 2007

[Utilise occasionnellement/rarement/jamais] 19h30 le 11 octobre 2007

Oui **Parfait, merci**

Non **[Merci quand même et au revoir]**

Avez-vous une plume ou un crayon à portée de la main que je puisse vous donner les coordonnées de l'endroit où cette discussion aura lieu :

Endroit: Opinion-Impact inc.
6818 St-Denis
Montréal, Québec
(Entre Bélanger et St-Zotique)

- 14) **Suivant les normes de l'industrie, on vous demandera de fournir une preuve d'identité officielle avec photo. Veuillez donc vous assurer d'apporter cette preuve avec vous. Si vous n'apportez pas de preuve d'identité, vous ne pourrez pas participer à la session. Laquelle des pièces d'identité suivantes apporterez-vous (ENCERCLEZ LA RÉPONSE)**

Permis de conduire	-1
Carte d'assurance-maladie (Carte soleil)	-2
Carte d'employé (e) avec photo	-3
Passeport	-4
Carte de citoyenneté	-5
Carte-étudiante émise par une université	-6
Autre preuves d'identité avec photo et nom (PRÉCISEZ)	-7

Les preuves d'identité suivantes ne seront pas acceptées:

- Passe d'autobus, carte étudiante
- Carte de bibliothèque
- Carte de crédit

15) Veuillez me dire exactement comment votre nom est épilé sur votre preuve d'identité.

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

La discussion prendra **deux heures** et vous recevrez **60,00\$** en guise de remerciement pour votre participation. **(SI LE RÉPONDANT LE DEMANDE : Cette compensation n'est pas considérée comme étant un revenu et n'est donc pas assujettie aux impôts.)**

INFORMATIONS OBLIGATOIRES : À LIRE À CHAQUE PARTICIPANT

- Votre participation est très importante.
- Si, pour une raison ou pour une autre, vous ne pouvez pas participer à la séance, veuillez nous le faire savoir au 514-278-5699 (Michel Dubé) car nous avons réservé une place pour vous dans cette étude et votre opinion est très importante pour ce projet.
- Veuillez arriver 15 minutes avant le début de la séance pour que le groupe puisse commencer à l'heure.
- Si vous êtes en retard, vous ne pourrez pas participer et vous ne serez donc pas rétribué.
- Si vous portez des lunettes pour lire ou écrire, veuillez les apporter car vous devrez inscrire vos réponses sur des questionnaires.

Quelle est la meilleure heure de la journée pour vous appeler la veille du groupe de discussion?
_____ Et à quel numéro de téléphone? _____

Nous serons donc heureux de vous rencontrer jeudi le 11 octobre prochain à

_____ **PRÉCISER L'HEURE À NOUVEAU**

Numéro de téléphone: Maison () _____

Bureau () _____

Nom de l'intervieweur: _____

(PRÉNOM ET NOM EN LETTRES MOULÉES)

Date: _____

Moderators Guide

**Health Canada
Nutrition Labelling Focus Groups
Final Moderator's Guide**

Interview Guidelines

- Use this document as a guide, it is meant to be a semi-structured discussion with focus group participants
- Ask additional questions for clarification
- It is not necessary to answer the questions in order
- Keep discussion informal and conversational
- Summarize notes, comments and conclusions at the end of the discussion
- Avoid discussion of a general nature. Participants should be talking about themselves, their behaviours and attitudes. They should not be expressing opinions about the general population or others.

Introduction, Guidelines & Warm-Up (10 min)

- Introduce the moderator and WOR
- Introduce assignment and role of the focus group
 - *Health Canada is the sponsor of these focus groups.*
 - *We're talking about making food choices.*
 - *Only talking with a few groups of people, thus your observations and opinions are important.*
- Conduct of the discussion
 - *Not all at once, but do not need to wait for me to call on you.*
 - *Want to get individual thoughts and opinions—we're not looking for a consensus. Encourage individual group members to participate.*
 - *Respect.*
 - *No wrong answers.*
- Audio recording and presence of observers.
 - *Assure participants we are not selling anything; this meeting is strictly for research purposes.*
 - *Colleagues behind the mirror who are observing.*
 - *Confirm that individual responses will be kept confidential. The purpose is not to report on individuals, but instead to get a better understanding of the information needs of Canadians.*
- Roundtable Intros

What I'd like you to do is go around the room and introduce yourself, first name is fine, and tell me what keeps you busy these days—work, family, hobbies.

General Use Of Nutrition Information (10 Minutes)

- First off, imagine yourself at the grocery store, and tell me what you look for when you purchase food for you, your family or your household? **[Accept any responses, but do not spend too much time on items like brand or price.]**
- When you purchase food for you, your family or your household, what's important for you in terms of nutrition?

[FOR SECOND GROUP, WHICH COULD CONTAIN NON-USERS OF INFORMATION, SAY "WE'RE GOING TO SPEND MUCH OF OUR TIME TALKING ABOUT HOW PEOPLE USE NUTRITION INFORMATION. SOME OF YOU WERE RECRUITED BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT REGULAR USERS OF NUTRITION INFORMATION. AS I ASK QUESTIONS, IF YOU USE WHAT WE'RE DISCUSSING, FEEL FREE TO CHIME IN, BUT IF YOU'RE NOT SO FAMILIAR, OR IF YOU DON'T USE IT REGULARLY, I WANT YOU TO TELL ME WHY YOU'RE NOT USING THE INFORMATION WE DISCUSS. ALSO I'M GOING TO BE PROVIDING HAND-OUTS ON SPECIFIC TYPES OF INFORMATION. YOU CAN LOOK AT THEM HERE, AND PROVIDE INPUT ON THE MATERIALS THAT YOU SEE."]

- Where do you get nutrition information about the food you purchase or eat? What sources of information do you use? **[Write on flipchart]**
 - Which of these do you use frequently?
 - Which of these provides valuable information to you?
 - **[Probe – If not mentioned, ask "what about nutrition information on the package itself?"]**
- I want you to focus on nutrition information that is on pre-packaged food for a bit. What do you look for?
 - Why do you look for this information (or... why are you not using information)? What does it tell you about the food?
 - Where, on the prepackaged food do you get this information?
 - How useful is it for your purposes?
 - How easy/difficult is it to interpret and use?
 - Do you trust this information?

Product Review (15 Minutes)

I'm going to hand-out some empty food packages here that have nutrition information on them. What I want you to do is to look at these **as you normally would** when you make food purchase decisions **when you're in a grocery store**. That is, I don't want you to look at **ALL** the information on here if you don't normally do it. Just look at this as you would when like you are shopping for food: **[Give a few minutes. Have a few people answer the first questions below]**

- So, if you were buying this product in a store, what is it that you would normally look at? **[Moderator to confirm that this information is something that they normally use. Write all responses on flip chart, and then for each ask...]**
 - How important is this to you
 - What is it telling you?
 - How does this help you make food choices?

OK – now look at some of the other information that is on here, that you may not use all the time...

- What other information on here would you find useful to you?
- What questions do you have about the nutrition information on here?
- What's missing on here? It could be either something you see on other foods, or questions that still remain about the nutritional value of this food

We've looked at some different kinds of food, and information on them.

- How do you compare one food to another – for example, one snack or cookie to another type of snack or cookie? How do you compare? What do you use?
- Once you return home with your food purchases, how do you use the nutritional information?
 - Do you use nutrition or health-related information to plan menus or meals?
 - Do you use this information to decide on serving sizes? How?

Focus On Health Claims (25-35 Minutes)

You've pointed out some of the information on pre-packaged food that you look at. Let's look at some of these in a bit more detail. [Moderator – go through questions below for a number of claims. Use some of the claims that raised discussion in the previous section. However, be sure to show one of each of:

- **Health Claims**
- **Nutrition Claims**
- **Health Check**
- **Whole grain symbol**
- **Smart Select**

For each one, ask...

- Who's noticed this while shopping?
 - **For those that have NOT noticed this before**, look at it and tell me what you think it means
 - **For those that have noticed it before** what do you think it means?

*I've asked you some questions about who **NOTICED** this, now I'd like to know about use.*

- Of those who have noticed this, give me a quick show of hands:
 - Who has considered this symbol or piece of information when making food choices? To be clear, I don't mean whether the information has made you actually purchase a food. What I mean is who has used it in their decision-making process when buying a food?
 - Who has **not** used this before in their decision making? Why not?

*Let me ask some questions of **those who have used this before** in your decision making:*

- What do you use it for, or what have you used it for in the past? Do you have examples of how you have used it? (moderator to prompt for: to choose a brand over another, to choose a different product, to buy a new food product, to not buy a particular product at all etc.)
- Where do you use them the most (e.g. at the grocery store to purchase foods, at home to choose foods, etc.)
- How else is this useful to you or your family?

For those that **don't use this** what are some of the reasons you don't use it?

OK, let me come back to all of you:

- Based on what you know, and what you've heard discussed in here, is this all the information that you need when you purchase a food – or is it a sufficient amount of information for you when you purchase a food?
 - **Prompt – So does this tell you that the food you are eating is a healthy choice?**
 - **Clarify – if a Heart Healthy Logo, ask “Is this all the information you would need to know about this food being healthy for your heart?”**
 - Do you think you need more information to make healthy choices? Where would you get more information?
- Based on what we've talked about or what you know, is there anything you think that is confusing or missing from this information?
- Tell me about your trust in this. Do you trust it?
- Is this regulated in any way? What do you know about its accuracy? Who governs it?

Background information for moderator:

In the nutrition labeling regulations, only nutrition claims are regulated. These can be nutrient-content claims such as “free”, “low in”, “reduced in” or “source of” “excellent source of”, etc. There are 42 of these, with specific criteria to follow. The other type of claims are health claims, highlighting a diet/health relationship. These are not commonly seen on pre-packaged foods. An example would be: a healthy diet rich in a variety of vegetables and fruit may help reduce the risk of some types of cancer.

The Health Check symbol, the PepsiCo. Smart Choice logo, the PC Blue Menu logo, the Gnereal Mills “Whole Grains” logo **and others** are NOT regulated by Health Canada. The companies can develop their own criteria and some even “sell” their logos – therefore, not necessarily an indication of the “best choice”. These “other claims” seem to be popular and we need to understand if people use them (or not and why), trust them (or not and why) and if they understand that they should also check for the other nutrition information (such as Nutrition Facts table, ingredient list) when choosing products.

Focus On Nutrition Facts table (25 Minutes)

I'm going to show you some Nutrition Facts table, and I want to spend some time talking about it. [Pass-out the two examples, have participants look at it. IF PARTICIPANTS RAISE ISSUES OF %DV OR SERVING SIZE BEFORE THE QUESTIONS ARE ASKED BELOW, JUMP TO THOSE QUESTIONS.]

- Before tonight, had you ever noticed this on pre-packaged foods?
- We're going to spend a lot of time talking about this table, but first-off, let me ask everyone, whether you've noticed it or not before, is there anything that you don't use, or that is confusing or unclear about this table? **[Moderator – prompt on %DV]**
- I've asked about whether you have noticed the table before. For those that have, who has used this to help them make food choices?
- ***For those that use the table:***
 - How often do you look at this table:
 - What is useful to you or your family?
 - What do you use it for, or what have you used it for in the past? Do you have examples where/how you have used this? (prompt for top 3 reasons for using it from each participant who said yes and ask why these 3 nutrients are important to them)
- For those that **have not used the table**, tell me a bit about why you haven't used it.
 - What prevents you from using it?
- *Now let's go back to everyone here, whether you've used it or not.* Look at the table, and besides what's been said, are there any ways you think you can use the table?
 - There are many potential uses for the Nutrition Facts table, and it can be used differently in different circumstances. I want to ask you about some of the ways you would use it:
 - Do you, or would you, use this at the grocery store? What for?
 - Do you use it to compare foods? How would you do that?
 - Do you use it to look at vitamins and minerals? Which ones? Why are these vitamins and minerals important to you?
 - Do you use it to look at the breakout of protein, carbohydrates and fats? What specifically are you looking at? Why is this important to you?
 - Do you use it when you get home to decide how much to eat?
- Is this enough information for you to make decisions? **[Moderator – be careful. Do not get side-tracked with too many suggestions about what should be there. Do not discuss adding content. Just focus on whether this helps make decisions.]**
- Which information do you find useful? Should it be used in conjunction with other nutrition information?

- Tell me about your trust in this. Do you trust it? Do you think the information is reliable?
- Is this regulated in any way? Who governs it?

Did anyone notice the specific amount of food mentioned on the table directly beneath the “Nutrition Facts” heading?

- Have you ever noticed it before tonight?
- How many have used it in the past (or use it regularly)?
 - What do you think it means?
 - How do you use it? (prompt for: compare foods, compare brands, select a new food, etc.)
 - Can you relate it to the amount of this food that you would normally eat?
 - Is it confusing in any way? Do you think you understand how to use it?
 - Is it useful information? Why or why not?

Tell me about the % Daily Value (%DV)

- Have you ever noticed it before tonight?
- What do you think it means?
- Who’s used it before? **If Yes** – How are you using it?
- What are some other reasons you think it is there? (prompt for: compare foods, compare brands, evaluate nutrients “at a glance”, etc.)
- For those that have not used it, tell me about why you haven’t used it.
- Is the % DV affected by the amount of the food you eat?
- **[Moderator – read definition]** *We’ve talked about it a bit, the %DV gives you an indication of whether a food has a lot or a little of a nutrient in it. It gives you a percentage based on the amount of a nutrient you should eat every day. A high percentage means that a serving of the food gives you a lot of the daily intake for that nutrient, and a low percentage means that the food does not give you a lot of intake for that nutrient. The percentages are based on a particular serving size, which we talked about before. That means the %DV you consume changes based on the amount you eat. The %DV is for a particular amount of food. If you eat more or less than this amount, you will need to change the %DV.*
 - Knowing this, how useful do you think %DV is?
 - Do you see how %DV allows you to compare foods at a glance?
 - If you had to double the amount of food indicated on the label, how would you read the %DV?
 - What kind of information would be helpful to get you to understand %DV?
 - What kind of information would be useful to get you to use %DV?
 - If you don’t use it, why? Do you think it could be useful if you understood it better? What kind of information would be useful to help you understand it?

Tell me about trans fat in a product.

- What do you look for when you are interested in eating a food without trans fat? **[What does it say about other fats and their content? Do you use the Nutrition Facts table?]**

Focus On Ingredient List (10 Minutes)

I'm going to show you a list of ingredients, and I want to spend some time talking about it. [Pass-out example, have participants look at it.]

- Before tonight, has anyone ever noticed this on pre-packaged foods?
- Is this useful to you or your family?
 - Why & Why not
- Who's used this before?
- **Among those who use it:**
 - What do you use it for, or what have you used it for in the past? Do you have examples where you have used this?
 - Do you use this at the grocery store? Do you use it when you get home?
 - Do you have examples when you have used this? (moderator: prompt for: comparing foods, choosing a new food product, choosing a new brand of food, looking for kinds of fat, looking for sugars, looking for a certain ingredient (allergen) etc.)
- **For those that have not used it before**
 - What prevents you from using it? What additional information would you need to use it?

For everyone in the group...

- What does this list tell you about the product?
- Do you think the order of the list is important?
- What's confusing about this?
- Is this regulated in any way? Who governs it?

Increased Use And Communications Points (15 Minutes)

I'm going to move into my last set of questions. These focus on communications about the nutrition information we have seen and talked about tonight:

- Why, specifically, are you not using nutrition information more than you are now? What would get you to use it more? **[This may have been covered in previous questions.]**
- We've seen different forms of nutrition information on pre-packaged food here tonight. Prior to tonight, where, if anywhere, have you gotten information about what we've discussed this evening? Who's talking about nutrition information on pre-packaged food **[Probe: Where have you heard this information? Who's talking about it - the media, from people responsible for giving nutrition information, the manufacturer or from other sources]**
- What have you heard here tonight that is new to you about nutrition information on pre-packaged foods? Is there something you heard here that may get you to use nutrition information more than you are using it now? Why?

- We have discussed three sources of information – the ingredient list, the health and nutrition claims (including the “icons” or stamps of approval) and the Nutrition Facts table. Which of these provides the most useful information for your needs?
 - Which will you look at first the next time you shop for food?
- Did you know that the three elements that we spoke about tonight, the Nutrition Facts table, the list of ingredients and the nutrition claims are regulated by the Federal Government?
 - How does this impact your opinion of these pieces of information?
- Have you ever looked for information about or tips to explain how to use nutrition labelling information? Where have you looked? What did you find? Who should be telling you about this kind of information?
- What kind of information would help you to better understand nutrition labels and make wise food choices?
- Where do you get general nutrition information from?
 - What are you reading?
 - What news sources?
 - What people (e.g. nutritionist, naturopath, doctor, nurse, etc...)
 - What web sites?

SANTÉ CANADA
GROUPES DE DISCUSSION
INFORMATION SUR LA VALEUR NUTRITIVE DES ALIMENTS PRE-EMBALLÉS
GUIDE FINAL
9 OCTOBRE 2007

Règles de base pour la discussion

- Se servir de ce document comme guide, la discussion avec les participants sera semi-structurée
- Poser des questions supplémentaires pour clarifier
- Ce n'est pas nécessaire de répondre aux questions dans l'ordre
- On veut que la discussion demeure informelle et conviviale
- Résumer les notes, commentaires et conclusions à la fin de la discussion
- Éviter les discussions trop générales et les projections. Les participants doivent parler de leurs propres comportements et attitudes plutôt que d'exprimer des opinions à propos des autres ou de l'ensemble de la population.

Introduction (10 minutes)

- Présentation de l'animatrice et de WOR.
- Expliquer le projet et le rôle de la discussion de groupe :
 - Le projet est parrainé par Santé Canada.
 - Nous parlerons de la façon de faire les choix d'aliments.
 - On n'effectuera que quelques groupes de discussion, c'est pourquoi vos opinions et observations sont si importantes
- Consignes pour la discussion
 - SVP ne parlez pas tous en même temps, mais vous n'avez pas besoin d'attendre que je sollicite votre opinion.
 - Importance des impressions et opinions de chacun: on ne recherche pas de consensus, les nuances et différences sont de précieux indices.
 - Respect
 - Il n'y a pas de bonnes/mauvaises réponses.
 - C'est important que chacun exprime son opinion.
- Enregistrement audio et présence d'observateurs derrière le miroir.
 - Assurer les participants qu'on ne vend rien: la discussion est faite strictement pour des fins de recherche
 - Observateurs derrière le miroir
 - L'animatrice n'est pas une experte
 - Confirmer que les réponses des participants demeureront anonymes: qu'on n'associera jamais quelqu'un à un commentaire

spécifique. Il ne s'agit pas de rapporter les propos de chacun mais plutôt d'avoir une meilleure compréhension des besoins de différents groupes d'individus à travers le Canada

- **Présentation des participants**

J'aimerais que vous vous présentiez vous-mêmes à tour de rôle en me donnant simplement votre prénom et en me disant quelques mots sur ce qui occupe surtout vos pensées ces temps-ci (travail, famille, passe-temps).

Utilisation générale de l'information sur l'alimentation (10 minutes)

- Tout d'abord, faites comme si vous étiez à l'épicerie et dites-moi ce que vous recherchez lorsque vous faites l'épicerie pour vous-même, pour votre famille ou votre foyer. **[Accepter toutes les réponses mais ne passez pas trop de temps sur des items tels la marque ou le prix.]**
- Lorsque vous achetez de la nourriture pour vous, votre famille ou votre foyer, qu'est-ce qui est important pour vous en matière d'alimentation ou de nutrition?

[POUR LE 2ÈME GROUPE QUI PEUT INCLURE DES GENS QUI N'UTILISENT PAS D'INFORMATION SUR LA NUTRITION DIRE : « NOUS ALLONS PASSER PAS MAL DE TEMPS À PARLER DE LA FAÇON DONT LES GENS SE SERVENT DE L'INFORMATION SUR LA NUTRITION. CERTAINS D'ENTRE VOUS ONT ÉTÉ INVITÉS À PARTICIPER JUSTEMENT PARCE QU'ILS N'UTILISENT PAS RÉGULIÈREMENT D'INFORMATION SUR LA NUTRITION. AU FUR ET À MESURE QUE JE POSERAI DES QUESTIONS, SI VOUS UTILISEZ LE GENRE D'INFORMATION DONT NOUS PARLONS, VEUILLEZ INTERVENIR, MAIS SI VOUS N'ÊTES PAS TRÈS FAMILIER AVEC CE QUE NOUS DISCUTONS OU SI VOUS NE VOUS EN SERVEZ PAS RÉGULIÈREMENT, JE VOUDRAIS QUE VOUS ME DISIEZ POURQUOI VOUS N'UTILISEZ PAS L'INFORMATION DONT NOUS PARLONS. JE VAIS AUSSI VOUS DISTRIBUER DE L'INFORMATION SUR CERTAINS TYPES DE RENSEIGNEMENTS SPÉCIFIQUES. VOUS POUVEZ LA CONSULTER ICI ET ME DIRE CE QUE VOUS PENSEZ DES DOCUMENTS QUE VOUS VERREZ ICI ».]

- Où prenez-vous l'information nutritionnelle sur les aliments que vous achetez ou que vous mangez? Quelles sources d'information utilisez-vous? **[Inscrire au tableau]**
 - Lesquelles de ces sources utilisez-vous fréquemment?
 - Lesquelles vous donnent de l'information qui a de la valeur ou qui est précieuse pour vous?
 - **[SONDER : - Si non-mentionné, demander « et pour ce qui a trait à l'information nutritionnelle sur des emballages des produits eux-mêmes? »]**
- J'aimerais que vous vous concentriez sur l'information nutritionnelle qu'on trouve sur les emballages de produits pré-emballés pendant les prochaines minutes. Quel genre d'information y cherchez-vous?

- Pourquoi regardez-vous cette information (ou...pourquoi est-ce que vous n'utilisez pas cette information)? Qu'est-ce que ça vous dit au sujet de cet aliment?
- Où trouvez-vous cette information sur l'emballage des produits préemballés?
- Jusqu'à quel point est-ce utile pour vos besoins?
- Jusqu'à quel point est-ce facile ou difficile à interpréter pour vous?
- Est-ce que vous faites confiance à cette information?

Évaluation des produits (15 Minutes)

Je vais maintenant vous montrer divers emballages de produits alimentaires vides qui comportent de l'information nutritionnelle. J'aimerais maintenant que vous regardiez ces emballages **de la même façon que vous le feriez normalement** lorsque vous décidez quels aliments vous allez acheter **lorsque vous êtes à l'épicerie**. En fait, je ne veux pas que vous regardiez **TOUTE** l'information sur l'emballage, si ce n'est pas ce que vous faites normalement. Regardez les simplement de la même manière que si vous faisiez vos achats alimentaires à l'épicerie. **[Octroyer quelques minutes. Laisser quelques personnes répondre aux premières questions ci-dessous.]**

- Alors, si vous achetiez ce produit à l'épicerie, qu'est-ce que vous regarderiez normalement sur l'emballage? **[L'animatrice doit confirmer que le participant regarde normalement cette information. Inscrire toutes les réponses au tableau puis, pour chaque réponse, demander]**
 - Jusqu'à quel point ceci est-il important pour vous?
 - Qu'est-ce que ça vous dit?
 - Comment est-ce que ça vous aide à choisir vos aliments?

Ok/d'accord – Regardez maintenant certaines des autres informations qui se trouvent sur les emballages et que vous n'utilisez pas tout le temps.

- Quelle autre information ici trouveriez-vous utile pour vous?
- Quelles questions avez-vous à propos de l'information nutritionnelle qui se trouve ici?
- Qu'est-ce qui manque là-dessus? Ça peut être soit quelque chose que vous voyez sur d'autres aliments ou des questions qui restent sans réponse pour vous à propos de la valeur nutritionnelle de cet aliment.

Nous avons regardé différentes sortes d'aliments et l'information qu'on trouve sur leurs emballages.

- Comment comparez-vous les aliments entre eux? – par exemple, une collation ou un biscuit à un autre type de biscuit ou de collation? Comment les comparez-vous? De quoi vous servez-vous pour les comparer?
- Lorsque vous revenez à la maison avec vos achats alimentaires, comment vous servez-vous de l'information nutritionnelle?
 - Utilisez-vous l'Information nutritionnelle ou l'information sur les effets pour la santé pour planifier vos menus ou vos repas?
 - Utilisez-vous cette information pour déterminer la grosseur des portions? Comment?

Focus sur les allégations pour la santé (25-35 Minutes)

Vous m'avez indiqué certaines informations que vous regardez sur les produits pré-emballés. Prenons le temps d'en regarder quelques uns plus en détail. [Animatrice – Examinez les questions suivantes pour plusieurs allégations. Abordez certaines des allégations qui ont suscité de la discussion dans la section précédente.

Assurez-vous de montrer au moins un exemple pour chacun des éléments suivants :

- Allégation relative à la santé
- Allégation sur la valeur nutritionnelle
- Visez santé (Health Check)
- Symbole “grains entiers”
- “Bien choisir”

Pour chacun, demander...

- Qui a remarqué ceci pendant qu'il faisait ses achats à l'épicerie?
 - **À ceux qui n'ont pas remarqué ceci auparavant**, « regardez-le et dites-moi ce que vous pensez que ça signifie »
 - **À ceux qui l'ont remarqué auparavant**, « qu'est-ce que vous pensez que ça signifie »?

Je vous ai posé des questions à propos de ceux qui avaient remarqué ceci; j'aimerais maintenant savoir comment vous vous en servez.

- **Parmi ceux qui l'ont remarqué**, j'aimerais que vous leviez rapidement la main pour me dire :
 - Qui a considéré ce symbole ou cette information au moment de choisir ses aliments? Pour être claire, je ne veux pas savoir si cette information vous a fait choisir ou non le produit mais plutôt si vous en avez tenu compte lorsque vous preniez la décision de l'acheter ou non.
 - Qui n'a pas considéré ceci pendant qu'il décidait d'acheter ou non un produit? Pourquoi pas?

*Laissez-moi poser quelques questions à **ceux qui ont déjà tenu compte de ceci dans leur processus de décision**:*

- Pourquoi en tenez-vous compte ou en avez-vous tenu compte dans le passé? Pouvez-vous me donner un exemple de la façon dont vous vous en êtes servi? (**Animatrice sonder** : pour choisir une marque plutôt qu'une autre, pour choisir un produit différent, pour acheter un nouveau produit, pour ne pas acheter du tout un produit en particulier, etc).
- Où vous en servez-vous le plus (cf. à l'épicerie pour acheter des aliments, à la maison pour choisir des aliments, etc.)
- De quelle autre façon est-ce utile pour vous ou pour votre famille?

À ceux qui ne l'utilisent pas: pour quelles raisons ne l'utilisez-vous pas?

OK – je m'adresse maintenant de nouveau à tout le monde:

- En vous basant sur ce que vous savez et sur ce que nous avons discuté ensemble ici, est-ce que ceci représente toute l'information dont vous avez besoin lorsque vous achetez des aliments – où est-ce que ceci vous donne assez d'information lorsque vous achetez des aliments?
 - **Sonder – Alors, est-ce que cela vous dit que les aliments que vous mangez constituent un choix qui est sain?**
 - **Clarifier – S'il s'agit d'un logo de la Fondation des maladies du coeur: "est-ce que le fait que cet aliment est sain pour votre cœur constitue toute l'information dont vous avez besoin?"**
 - Pensez-vous que vous avez besoin de plus d'information pour faire des choix qui sont bons pour la santé? Où obtiendriez-vous plus d'information?

- En vous basant sur ce dont on a parlé ou sur ce que vous savez, y a-t-il quelque chose qui prête à confusion ou qui manque dans cette information?

- Parlez-moi de la confiance que vous avez en ceci. Est-ce que vous y avez confiance/est-ce que vous le croyez?
- Est-ce réglementé d'une façon ou d'une autre? Qu'est-ce que vous savez à propos de l'exactitude de ces règlements? Qui les administre ou les gère?

Information contextuelle pour l'animatrice:

La réglementation sur l'étiquetage comporte seulement des règles relatives aux allégations nutritionnelles. Ce peut-être, par exemple, des allégations sur le contenu nutritif des aliments comme « sans », « faible en », « réduit », ou « source de », « excellente source de » etc. On compte 42 de ces allégations qui doivent se conformer à des critères spécifiques. L'autre type d'allégations touche la santé : il met en évidence un lien ou une relation entre le régime alimentaire et la santé. On ne voit pas généralement ce type d'allégation sur les aliments pré-emballés. Ce pourrait être par exemple : un régime alimentaire sain riche en fruits et légumes variés peut aider à réduire le risque d'avoir certains types de cancers.

Le symbole Visez santé avec le crochet, le logo « Bien choisir » (Smart Choice) de Pepsi Co, le logo des « Menu Bleu » du Choix du Président, le logo « grains entiers » de General Mills et autres logos **NE SONT PAS** réglementés par Santé Canada. Les compagnies peuvent développer leurs propres critères et certaines font même la promotion de leur logo – donc, ce n'est pas nécessairement un indice que c'est « le meilleur choix ». Ces autres « allégations » semblent assez populaire et on doit bien comprendre si les gens les utilisent ou non et pourquoi; s'ils les croient ou non et pourquoi; et s'ils comprennent qu'ils devraient également vérifier le reste des informations nutritionnelles comme le tableau de la valeur nutritive, la liste des ingrédients etc. lorsqu'ils choisissent un produit.

Focus sur le tableau de la valeur nutritive (25 Minutes)

Je vais vous montrer un exemple de tableau de la valeur nutritive et nous allons maintenant passer du temps à en parler ensemble. [DISTRIBUER LES 2 EXEMPLES ET DEMANDER AUX PARTICIPANTS DE LES REGARDER. SI LES PARTICIPANTS POSENT DES QUESTIONS OU SOULÈVENT DES PROBLÈMES AU SUJET DU « % VALEUR QUOTIDIENNE » OU SUR LA GROSSEUR DE LA PORTION AVANT QU'ON LEUR POSE LA QUESTION PLUS BAS, ALLER DIRECTEMENT À CES QUESTIONS.]

- Avant aujourd'hui, aviez-vous déjà remarqué ceci sur les produits pré-emballés?
- On va passer pas mal de temps à parler de ce tableau, mais, pour commencer, laissez-moi demander à tout le monde, que vous l'ayez déjà remarqué ou non auparavant, y a-t-il quoique ce soit que vous n'utilisez pas, qui prête à confusion ou qui n'est pas clair à propos de ce tableau? **[Animatrice – Sonder au sujet du % valeur quotidienne]**
- Je vous ai demandé si vous aviez remarqué ce tableau auparavant : parmi ceux qui l'avaient déjà remarqué : « qui s'en est déjà servi pour l'aider à choisir des aliments »?
- **Demander à ceux qui utilisent ce tableau:**
 - À quelle fréquence regardez-vous ce tableau?
 - Qu'est-ce qui est utile pour vous ou pour votre famille?
 - Pourquoi vous en servez-vous ou vous en êtes-vous déjà servi dans le passé? Donnez-moi des exemples : où et comment l'avez-vous utilisé? (Sonder pour obtenir les 3 principales raisons d'utilisation de chaque participant qui a dit oui et leur demander pourquoi ces trois nutriments sont importants pour eux).
- **Demander à ceux qui n'ont pas utilisé le tableau :**
 - Dites-moi un peu pourquoi vous ne vous en êtes pas servi?
 - Qu'est-ce qui vous retient ou vous empêche de l'utiliser?
- *Je m'adresse maintenant à tout le monde, que vous l'ayiez utilisé ou non. Regardez le tableau : en plus de ce qui a déjà été dit, y a-t-il d'autres façons dont vous pensez que vous pouviez vous servir de ce tableau?*
 - Il y a plusieurs usages potentiels pour le tableau de la valeur nutritive et on peut s'en servir différemment dans différentes circonstances. J'aimerais qu'on parle de différentes façons ou circonstances où on pourrait s'en servir:
 - Est-ce que vous vous en servez ou pourriez vous en servir à l'épicerie? Pourquoi ou comment?
 - Vous en servez-vous pour comparer les aliments? Comment procéderiez-vous?
 - Vous en servez-vous pour vérifier les vitamines et les minéraux? Lesquels? Pourquoi ces vitamines et minéraux sont-ils importants pour vous?

- Vous en servez-vous pour voir la répartition des protéines, des glucides et des gras? Qu'est-ce que vous regardez plus particulièrement? Pourquoi est-ce important pour vous?
 - Vous en servez-vous lorsque vous revenez à la maison pour décider quelle quantité manger?
- Est-ce que ça contient suffisamment d'information pour que vous preniez des décisions? **[ANIMATRICE: - attention. Ne pas se laisser distraire par trop de suggestions au sujet de ce qui devrait y être. Ne pas discuter des ajouts au contenu. Simplement se concentrer sur le fait que ça aide ou non à prendre des décisions.]**
 - Quelle information trouvez-vous utile? Est-ce que ça devrait être utilisé en conjonction avec d'autre information sur la nutrition?
 - Parlez-moi de votre degré de confiance envers ce tableau? Est-ce que vous lui faites confiance? Pensez-vous que l'information est fiable?
 - Est-ce réglementé de quelque façon? Qui la réglemente?

Est-ce que quelqu'un a remarqué la quantité de nourriture spécifiée sur le tableau juste en dessous de l'entête « Valeur nutritive »?

- L'aviez-vous déjà remarqué avant ce soir?
- Combien d'entre vous s'en sont déjà servi auparavant (ou s'en servent régulièrement)?
 - Qu'est-ce que vous pensez que ça veut dire?
 - Comment vous en servez-vous? (Sonder : pour comparer des aliments, des marques, choisir un nouvel aliment, etc)
 - Est-ce que vous pouvez le relier à la quantité de cet aliment que vous consommez habituellement?
 - Est-ce que ça prête à confusion d'une manière ou d'une autre? Pensez-vous que vous comprenez comment vous en servir?
 - Est-ce de l'information utile? Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?

Parlez-moi du “% valeur quotidienne” (%VQ)

- L'aviez-vous déjà remarqué avant ce soir?
- Qu'est-ce que vous pensez que ça veut dire?
- Qui s'en est déjà servi auparavant? **Si oui** – Comment vous en servez-vous?
- Pour quelles autres raisons pensez-vous que c'est là? (sonder: pour comparer des aliments, des marques, pour évaluer les nutriments “d'un coup d'oeil”, etc)
- Pour ceux qui ne s'en sont pas servi: dites-moi pourquoi vous ne vous en êtes pas servi.
- Est-ce que le %VQ est affecté par la quantité de nourriture que vous mangez?
- **[Animatrice – lire la définition]** *Nous en avons un peu parlé,, le %VQ vous indique si un aliment contient beaucoup ou peu d'un nutriment. Il vous donne un % fondé sur la quantité de ce nutriment que vous devriez consommer chaque jour. Un pourcentage élevé signifie qu'une portion de cet aliment vous donne une grosse quantité de l'apport quotidien de ce nutriment et un faible pourcentage signifie que cet aliment ne vous donne pas une grosse quantité de l'apport*

quotidien de ce nutriment. Les pourcentages sont basés sur une grosseur de portion spécifique dont nous avons parlé. Ceci veut dire que le % VQ que vous consommez change selon la quantité que vous mangez. Le % VQ est établi selon une quantité spécifique de nourriture : si vous mangez plus ou moins que cette quantité, vous devrez adapter/changer le %VQ.

- En sachant cela, jusqu'à quel point trouvez-vous que le %VQ est utile?
- Voyez-vous comment le %VQ vous permet de comparer des aliments d'un seul coup d'oeil?
- Si vous deviez doubler la quantité indiquée sur l'étiquette, comment liriez-vous le %VQ?
- Quel genre d'information serait utile pour vous faire comprendre le %VQ?
- Quel genre d'information vous serait utile pour que vous utilisiez le %VQ?
- Si vous ne l'utilisez-pas, pourquoi? Pensez-vous que cela pourrait être utile si vous le compreniez mieux? Quel genre d'information vous aiderait à en comprendre l'utilité?

Parlez-moi des gras trans dans les produits.

- Qu'est-ce que vous vérifiez lorsque vous désirez manger des aliments qui n'ont pas de gras trans? **[Qu'est-ce que ça dit au sujet d'autres gras et de leur contenu? Utilisez-vous le tableau de la valeur nutritive?]**

Focus sur la liste d'ingrédients (10 Minutes)

*Je vais vous montrer une liste d'ingrédients et je voudrais qu'on en parle pendant un moment. **[Distribuer l'exemple, laisser les participants le regarder.]***

- Avant aujourd'hui, est-ce que quelqu'un a déjà remarqué ceci sur les aliments pré-emballés?
- Est-ce utile pour vous ou pour votre famille?
 - Pourquoi/pourquoi pas?
- Qui s'en est déjà servi auparavant?
- **Parmi ceux qui s'en servent:**
 - Pourquoi vous en servez-vous? Ou pourquoi vous en êtes-vous déjà servi dans le passé? Pouvez-vous me donner des exemples de situations où vous vous en êtes servi?
 - Vous en servez-vous à l'épicerie? Vous en servez-vous lorsque vous revenez à la maison?
 - Avez-vous des exemples de fois où vous l'avez utilisé?
(Animatrice sonder : pour comparer des aliments, pour choisir de nouveaux produits, pour choisir une nouvelle marque, pour vérifier les différents types de gras, pour vérifier les sucres, pour vérifier un ingrédient particulier (allergies) etc.)
- **Pour ceux qui ne s'en sont pas servi auparavant**
 - Qu'est-ce qui vous empêche de l'utiliser? De quels renseignements additionnels auriez-vous besoin pour vous en servir?

Demander à tous...

- Qu'est-ce que cette liste vous dit au sujet du produit?
- Croyez-vous que l'ordre dans la liste est important?
- Qu'est-ce qui prête à confusion là-dedans?
- Est-ce réglementé d'une façon quelconque? Qui la contrôle?

Usage accru et points de communication (15 Minutes)

Je vais maintenant poursuivre avec ma dernière série de questions. Celles-ci portent sur la communication au sujet de l'information nutritionnelle que nous avons vue et dont nous avons parlé ce soir.

- De façon spécifique, pourquoi n'utilisez-vous pas l'information nutritionnelle plus que vous le faites présentement? Qu'est-ce qui ferait que vous vous en serviriez davantage? **[Ceci aura peut-être été déjà couvert lors de points précédents.]**
- Ce soir, nous avons vu différentes formes d'information nutritionnelle sur les produits pré-emballés. Avant ce soir, où aviez-vous pris votre information sur ce que nous avons discuté ce soir, si vous en aviez pris? Qui parle d'information nutritionnelle sur les produits alimentaires pré-emballés? **[Sonder: Où avez-vous entendu cette information? Qui en parlait – les médias, les gens responsables de fournir de l'information nutritionnelle, le manufacturier ou quelque autre source?]**
- Qu'est-ce que vous avez entendu ici ce soir qui était nouveau pour vous au sujet de l'information sur les aliments pré-emballés? Avez-vous entendu ici quelque chose qui serait susceptible de vous faire utiliser l'information nutritionnelle davantage que ce que vous faites présentement? Pourquoi?
- Nous avons parlé de 3 sources d'information – la liste d'ingrédients, les allégations de santé et de nutrition (incluant les icônes, logos ou sceaux d'approbation) et le tableau de la valeur nutritive. Laquelle de ces 3 sources vous fournit l'information la plus utile selon vos besoins?
 - Laquelle regarderez-vous en premier lieu la prochaine fois que vous ferez l'épicerie?
- Saviez-vous que les 3 éléments dont nous avons parlé ce soir, le tableau de la valeur nutritive, la liste d'ingrédients et les allégations nutritionnelles sont réglementées par le gouvernement fédéral?
 - Comment est-ce que ça influence votre opinion sur ces trois éléments d'information?
- Avez-vous déjà cherché de l'information ou des trucs pour vous expliquer comment vous servir de l'information nutritionnelle contenue sur les emballages? Où avez-vous regardé? Qu'avez-vous trouvé? Qui devrait vous donner ce genre d'information?

- Quel genre d'information vous aiderait à mieux comprendre les étiquettes nutritionnelles et à faire des choix plus éclairés?
- En général, où obtenez-vous votre information nutritionnelle?
 - Que lisez-vous?
 - A quelles sources de nouvelles avez-vous recours?
 - Qui vous informe (par exemple: nutritionnistes, naturopathes, médecin, infirmière, etc.)
 - Quels sites Internet consultez-vous?

List Of Exhibit Items Used In The Focus Groups

LIST OF EXHIBIT ITEMS PRESENTED IN FOCUS GROUPS

- 1) Lucky Charms Cereal with a "Whole Grain" logo along on the top portion of the PDP.
- 2) Ragu Spaghetti sauce with no nutrition claims on it.
- 3) Country Harvest Brand Bread, 100%Whole Grain Flax, with "25% less sodium" on it.
- 4) Campbell's Chicken Broth with the words "25% less sodium than our regular condensed variety"
- 5) Rougemont 1.8L Apple Juice with no claims on it
- 6) Ruffles/Lay's Natural Sea Salted, Reduced Fat Potato Chips with the "Smart Selections" green check on it. It says "25% less fat than regular Ruffles Potato Chips"
- 7) "Low Fat" Vanilla yogurt
- 8) Triscuit Crackers with the message "62% less Sodium than Original Triscuit Crackers" and a "Sensible Solutions" logo
- 9) Orville Redenbacher's Gourmet Popcorn - regular red package with "Whole Grain Goodness" written on the front, and then an explanation on the top flap quoting Canada's Food Guide that says "Orville Redenbacher Popcorn is a whole grain and a source of fibre! Canada's Food Guide to Health Eating advises Canadians to choose whole grain and enriched products more often."
- 10) Regular Becel Margarine with a Health Check Logo on it from Heart and Stroke Foundation, plus a few other claims and a Heart-Shaped logo with Omega-3 in it.
- 11) Garden Select Catelli Spaghetti Sauce with the Health Check logo on it from HSF, along with "Low in Fat and Saturated Fat."
- 12) Oatmeal crisp cereal with a claim that says "A healthy diet containing foods high in potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a risk factor for stroke and heart disease. Oatmeal Crisp is high in potassium and low in sodium."
- 13) Blue Menu Apple 35g Granola Bars

NB – The same exhibits were used in the English and French groups and were checked to ensure that the same messages were communicated in both languages.

Hand-Outs Used In Focus Groups

OATMEAL CRISP CEREAL

High Potassium, Low Sodium

A healthy diet containing foods high in potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a risk factor for stroke and heart disease. Oatmeal Crisp is high in potassium and low in sodium

Céréales Avoine Croquante

Teneur élevée en potassium, Pauvres en sodium

Une alimentation saine qui comporte des aliments à teneur élevée en potassium et à faible teneur en sodium peut réduire le risque d'hypertension artérielle, un facteur de risque des maladies cardiovasculaires. Les céréales Avoine Croquante sont riches en potassium et pauvres en sodium

Nutrition Facts

Per 2 slices (64 g)

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 140	
Fat 1.5 g	2 %
Saturated 0.3 g + Trans 0.5 g	4 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 290 mg	12 %
Carbohydrate 26 g	9 %
Fibre 3 g	12 %
Sugars 2 g	
Protein 5 g	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 4 %	Iron 10 %

Nutrition Facts

Per burger (130 g)

Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 200	
Fat 9 g	14 %
Saturated Fat 2 g + Trans 1 g	15 %
Cholesterol 70 mg	
Sodium 500 mg	33 %
Carbohydrate 4 g	1 %
Fibre 0 g	0 %
Sugars 0 g	
Protein 25 g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 4 %	Iron 2 %

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decompressor
are needed to see this picture.

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Chicken Noodle Soup

Chicken broth, fresh egg noodles (enriched wheat flour, whole egg), seasoned chicken, water, salt, chicken fat, mechanically separated chicken meat, corn starch, monosodium glutamate, onion powder, yeast extract, spice, beta carotene, soy protein isolate and dehydrated garlic.

Soupe poulet et nouilles

Bouillon de poulet, nouilles fraîches aux oeufs (farine de blé enrichie, oeuf entier), poulet assaisonné, eau, sel, gras de poulet, viande de poulet séparée mécaniquement, amidon de maïs, glutamate monosodique, poudre d'oignon, extrait de levure, épices, bêta-carotène, isolat de protéines de soya et ail déshydraté.

Bran Crunch cookies

Enriched wheat flour, sugar, canola oil with TBHQ & citric acid, wheat bran, glucose-fructose, butter, salt, ammonium bicarbonate, wheat starch, sodium bicarbonate, soya lecithin, artificial flavour, colour (contains tartrazine), citric acid, sodium benzoate.

Biscuits croquants au son

Farine de blé enrichie, sucre, huile de canola avec HQBT et acide citrique, son de blé, glucose-fructose, beurre, sel, bicarbonate d'ammonium, amidon de blé, bicarbonate de sodium, lécithine de soja, arôme artificiel, colorant (contient de la tartrazine), acide citrique, benzoate de sodium.

Oatmeal Crisp cereal

Whole grain oat, whole grain wheat, sugar, almond pieces, whole grain rolled oats, golden syrup, malt syrup, corn syrup, potassium citrate, artificial flavour, salt, annatto, wheat starch, gum acacia, tocopheroles,

vitamins and minerals: niacinamide, calcium pantothenate, pyridoxine hydrochloride (vitamine B6), folate, iron.

Contains wheat and almond ingredients. May contain trace of milk.

Céréales Avoine Croquante

Avoine entière, blé entier, sucre, morceaux d'amande, flocons d'avoine entière, sirop doré, sirop de malt, sirop de maïs, citrate de potassium, arôme artificiel, sel, rocou, amidon de blé, gomme arabique, tocophérols,

vitamines et minéraux: niacinamide, pantothénate de calcium, chlorhydrate de pyridoxine (vitamine B6), folate, fer.

Contient des ingrédients du blé et de l'amande. Peut contenir des traces de lait.