

# Nutrition labelling for fortified foods in South Africa

Mandatory fortification of wheat flour, wheat bread and maize meal with vitamin A, zinc, folic acid, iron, B1, B2, B3, B6. Mandatory iodisation of food-grade salt (except in certain cases).

## 1. TAKEAWAYS

Labels on fortified foods in South Africa must include a nutrient declaration (3). Where foods are fortified to meet regulations, foods can also make nutrition and health claims (4) and/or display a fortification logo (5). On page 2, brown wheat flour is provided as a pictorial case study product (6) as well as a summary of key regulations (7) and links to further information (8).

## 2. GENERAL

- It is an offence to label food in a false or misleading manner (e.g., to include B12 in the food's ingredients list when there is no B12 in the food).
- Labels must be clearly visible and in English and where possible another official South African language.
- Unless otherwise specified (e.g., for small packages), lower case lettering on labels should be  $\geq 1$ mm in height.
- Administration of all food regulation is assigned by the Department of Health to local municipalities and food health inspectors at ports of entry. Further details of compliance requirements for fortified foods are details in the relevant sections below and in the regulations in section 7. Manufacturers may seek exemption from fortification labelling provisions by written application to the Department of Health

## 3. NUTRIENT DECLARATION

Nutrient declarations are mandatory where a claim is made on pack – including a claim that a food is fortified.

Nutrient declarations are voluntary for other foods.

Where a nutrient declaration is included on a label, it must:

- Be presented in a tabular (or table) format, unless otherwise indicated in the regulations.
- Be titled "Typical nutritional information"
- Include a statement on a single serve's mass of volume
- Express nutrition information in columns per serve and per 100g (solids) / 100mL (liquids)
- Include minimum mandatory nutrition information: Energy (kJ); protein (g); total carbohydrates (g); total sugar (g); fibre (g); total fat (g); saturated fat (g); sodium/salt (mg/g) NB Protein, vitamins and minerals for which a Nutrient Reference Value (NRV) exists may be included and expressed as a % of the NRV per single serve in a new, separate column on the right of the example table, provided they are in amounts of  $\geq 5\%$  of the NRV (except for food vehicles and packaged water).
- For fortified foods, include nutritional information for the fortificants per specifications declared per daily serve and

per 100g. For dry, uncooked wheat flour and maize meal, the daily serving can be 100g

- Include information for other nutrients where a nutrition claim is made
- Include a footer inclusive of other details (e.g., the data source where a manufacturer voluntarily provides a declaration).
- Be on the back or side of pack, with lettering  $\geq 1$ mm in height for lower-case letters or a bigger size if packaged in woven polypropylene, for easy legibility

## 4. NUTRITION AND HEALTH CLAIMS + FORTIFICATION CLAIMS

- You may include on the label nutrition and health claims, and fortification claims if a food is fortified per regulations (i.e., Iodated for better health; Fortified for better health; Manufactured with fortified maize meal [or wheat flour] for better health).
- If using the Iodated for better health claim on food-grade salt, it must be printed in a prominent position on the main panel in bold print against a contrasting or clear background on all packaging and be clearly visible, easily legible and indelible.
- Labels on food grade iodated salt used as a carrier for  $\geq 1$  nutrients must state "iodated salt", "salt fortified with iron", or "salt fortified with vitamins". Labels on food grade non-iodated salt (intended for manufacture of compound foodstuffs and available in pharmacies in packages of  $\leq 500$ g) must state "non-iodated salt".
- A product may be eligible to make voluntary nutrition claims, including claims that a food is a "source of", "high in" or "very high in" a vitamin or mineral provided it contains a specific % of the NRV for a vitamin or mineral.
- Claims, symbols or words that imply health-giving properties or healthiness are prohibited aside from the regulated fortification claims and logos.

## 5. FORTIFICATION LOGOS

You may include the official fortification logos if a food is fortified per regulations (see examples below). They mirror the claims listed in section 4. The logo must be a specified format and size. E.g., printed in a prominent position on the main panel in bold print against a contrasting or clear background, and be clearly visible, legible and indelible; and  $\geq 25$  mm for paper and plastic packaging and  $\geq 100$  mm for woven polypropylene packaging; and be printed in monochrome or colours as specified.



## 6. PICTORIAL CASE STUDY PRODUCT – BROWN WHEAT FLOUR

This case study product only details the three nutrition label types outlined in this fact sheet – nutrient declaration, fortification claim and fortification logo – along with a product name. Figures used are provided as an example only and may not be accurate. Other details are also required on food labels (e.g., ingredient list and weight) but not shown here.



Front of pack

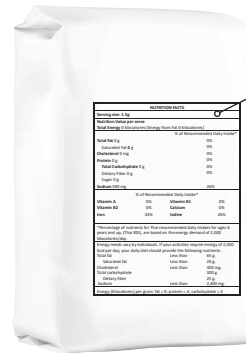
Fortification logo

Fortification claim



Back of pack

Nutrient declaration



## 7. MORE DETAIL ON THE LABELLING REGULATIONS

- **Foodstuffs, Cosmetics and Disinfectants Act 54 of 1972** (as amended to 2009) sets out general requirements for food labelling, including that it cannot be false and misleading, and the powers, duties and functions of food inspectors, with offences and penalties.
- **Regulations Relating to the Labelling and Advertising of Foodstuffs No. 146 of 2010** sets out requirements for the format of the nutrient declaration, criteria for nutrient content claims, comparative claims and prohibited terminology (e.g., “health” and “healthy”), and procedures for calculating and documenting the quantities of nutrients present in foods. Also allows food manufacturers or importers to seek labelling exemptions, requires fortification mix manufacturers, importers and suppliers to register with the Department of Health, and specifies requirements for importers or sellers of food vehicles. **Related guidelines** provide more detail.
- Regulations Relating to the Fortification of Certain Foodstuffs (two regulatory instruments make up the regulations: **No 504 of 2003** and **No 1206 of 2008**) mandates fortification of wheat flour, wheat bread and maize meal with specific amounts of Vitamin A, Zinc, Folic Acid, Iron and other fortificants. Sets out when claims such as ‘fortified for better health’ and the official fortification logos can be used on a label and creates an offence if used incorrectly. Sets out procedural requirements for those manufacturing, importing or supplying fortification mix to register with the Department of Health. Requirements are specified for manufacturers, importers or sellers of food vehicles (e.g., keeping monthly records). Exemptions from labelling provisions can be sought from the Department of Health under these Regulations.
- **Regulations Relating to Food Grade Salt (No 184 of 2007)** mandates iodisation of food-grade salt (for salt used as a foodstuff for direct sale to consumers and for foodstuff manufacturing, or as a carrier or nutrients or food additives. Not applicable to some salts, such as that sold in pharmacies labelled non-iodated salt). Sets out requirements to use the ‘iodated for better health’ claim and official logo on food grade salt labels, requirements for sampling iodated salt at the point of processing and packaging, and analysis of each batch of iodated salt. Exemptions from iodation can be sought in specific circumstances.
- South Africa released **draft food labelling regulations** in April 2023 to update requirements for:



- Nutrient declarations – making them mandatory for nearly all products, including products that are mandatorily fortified, and vitamins or minerals present in quantities of between 15% to  $\geq 30\%$  of the NRV for the vitamin or mineral
- Nutrition and health claims – imposing additional criteria for voluntarily making nutrition and health claims (e.g., being able to state that a vitamin or mineral is a “source of” or “contains” or “with added” if the vitamin or mineral is present in quantities of between 15% to  $< 30\%$  of the relevant NRV for the vitamin or mineral; “high in” if the vitamin or mineral is present in quantities of  $\geq 30\%$  of the relevant NRV; and “very high in” or “excellent source” if the vitamin or mineral is present in quantities of  $\geq 60\%$  of the relevant NRV), and enrichment of food (e.g., specifying that nutrients may only be added to a foodstuff which requires a list of ingredients but is not a defined fake food and which passed the Profiling Model for front-of-pack labelling and is not required to bear front-of-pack labelling under the regulations).
- The draft legislation would also create a new mandatory front-of-pack warning label for foods high in salt, sugar, saturated fat and/or containing artificial sweeteners. An example logo is below.



## 8. REGULATORS, USEFUL CONTACTS AND WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

- The **National Department of Health** implements the regulations above.
- South African Government regulations can be searched at <https://www.gov.za/documents/acts>.
- The US Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Foreign Agricultural Service issues a Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and Standards Country Report for South Africa on a regular basis. See their **South Africa** page to access the latest report.
- The Global Fortification Data Exchange’s **South African Fortification dashboard** provides more detail about food fortification in the country.

