

The Tick Update

May 2007



CERT™

Pick the Tick

TICK as part of a balanced diet

Due to the many thousands of New Zealanders who remain at risk of obesity and subsequent diseases, the long-running Heart Foundation Tick Programme has taken the socially responsible step of further educating consumers about healthier food choices.

The Heart Foundation Tick Programme now categorises Tick foods as either 'everyday' or 'occasional', highlighting which Tick foods can be eaten everyday as part of a balanced diet and which Tick foods should be eaten occasionally and limited in the diet.

The Tick Programme used a skilled panel of professionals including the National Heart Foundation dietitians and the Food and Nutrition Working Group, a group of external advisors headed by Professor Murray Skeaff, to define which Tick foods could be eaten daily and which should be limited. As a result, 15 types of food were deemed to fall under the occasional food category, for example battered and crumbed products, sausages and patties, deli meats, sweet biscuits and ice-cream.

Occasional Food Categories

Battered & Crumbed Products
Cereal Bars
Cooking Sauces
Deli Meats
Dips
Frozen Fish Crumbed
Frozen Potato Chips & Wedges
Hard & Semi Soft Cheeses
Ice Cream,
Pies & Pastries
Salad Dressings & Mayonnaise
Sausages & Patties
Soy Based Desserts
Stocks
Sweet Biscuits

Information on everyday and occasional foods is now highlighted in Tick communications material such as the Tick Shopping List, Healthy Eating Guide and on the Tick website. General practices nationwide have also been sent updated material – please find your copies enclosed.

The decision to further categorise Tick products as either occasional and everyday foods was based on criticism by some public health officials that shoppers may be influenced to eat more occasional foods with the Tick because they see all Tick products as being healthy.

In response to this the Tick Programme carried out research into occasional foods and shoppers attitudes and found that the vast majority of shoppers were well aware that the Tick was not a license to over indulge. For example results showed 91% of Tick shoppers disagreed with the statement: If ice-cream has the Tick on it, people can eat as much as they like.

Further drilling down into the small percentage who did believe a Tick on food meant you could eat as much as you like showed that this group is over-represented by Maori and Pacific shoppers and low-income shoppers.

These groups currently make up a small percentage of current Tick shoppers. Separately targeted communications material is now being produced to educate these groups on the Tick and how they can use it as a tool to buy healthier food.

Tick Programme Manager Ian Mathieson says the new categories of everyday and occasional foods are about taking a socially responsible stance in partnership with food manufacturers.

"Since its inception 10 years ago, the Tick has highlighted healthier choices across more than 50 different food types.

But it is important, especially in this current obesogenic environment that we make sure we talk about using the Tick as part of a balanced diet, and it is equally important that Tick food manufacturers do the same," he said.

Manufacturers of occasional foods, whose products meet the tough nutritional standards to receive the Tick, are now being asked to comply with advertising guidelines for these foods as well.

"We want to make sure that our licensees take a responsible approach to the advertising of Tick foods that should be limited in the diet, so advertising should not indicate that the product can be eaten frequently," said Mr Mathieson.

"Our licensees have responded positively to the concept of occasional food and the responsible way we talk about it. These companies see the value of providing healthier food choices for consumers, that is why they are part of the Tick Programme," he said.



If you would like to order The Tick Shopping List or The Tick Guide to Healthier Eating, email Sue Doutre at sued@nhf.org.nz or phone Sue on 09 571 9191, stating the order quantity.

An update for health professionals



TICK club hits 25,000 members

A recent competition to win \$2,000 of Tick groceries has helped significantly boost Tick Club membership. Through the Tick Club direct communication is made with shoppers via an e-newsletter that offers healthy recipe tips, Tick product offers and general information on the Tick programme and how it can help shoppers make healthier food choices.

"It's great we are able to continue to grow our direct audience. By getting into the homes of over 25,000 shoppers interested in buying healthier food it creates a group of educated Tick ambassadors who can spread the word on healthier eating to other consumers," says Ian Mathieson, Tick Programme Manager.

No TICK partnership planned with McDonald's

Recently the media ran several stories on the Australian Heart Foundation and their partnership with fast food restaurant McDonald's. The partnership arose from the Australian's Tick Food Service Programme which specifically works with restaurants and cafes.

Considering this new partnership has caused considerable debate amongst obesity opinion leaders, both in Australia and in New Zealand, it is important for the New Zealand Heart Foundation Tick Programme to clarify its position.

The New Zealand Heart Foundation has no plans to introduce a food service component to the Tick Programme at this time. Therefore, working with McDonald's or any other restaurant is not a current priority to the New Zealand Heart Foundation Tick Programme.

The public health goal of the Heart Foundation Tick Programme is to improve New Zealand's food supply through the formulation and reformulation of food and then signposting healthier choices of food to consumers. The Tick Programme remains focussed on packaged foods.

Although the Tick Programme is not currently working on improving the nutritional value of takeaway foods, the Heart Foundation as a whole has a number of initiatives making big improvements in this area, such as Best Practice Frying and the Pie Group.

With Kiwis spending over \$100 million a year on takeaway foods, this is an area that the Heart Foundation will continue to work on to improve the health of all New Zealanders.

New TICK Technical Services Manager

After five years of juggling the Tick and other public health work at the National Heart Foundation, Dave Monro is now working full time in the public health team as Food Industry Setting Manager.

The role of Tick Technical Services Manager has grown to require a full-time person to manage food licensees through the food formulation and packaging process and Anna Malan has joined the Tick team to carry out this challenging role.

Anna is a NZ trained and NZ and UK registered dietitian. After graduating in NZ she worked as a medical nutrition sales representative for Abbott Laboratories for over two years, before heading off to the UK where she worked as a locum clinical dietitian for four years. In this role she worked in areas such as cardiac surgery, obesity surgery, cardiac intensive care, stroke and endocrinology.



Vegetables feature amongst new TICK products

Close to 1,000 products are now registered on the Tick Programme, with over 20 new products coming on-line since the New Year. In the Tick pipeline is a large range of pre-packaged salads, stirfrys and lettuces produced by Leaderbrand, along with interest from Oakelys Premium Fresh Vegetables who have a range of potatoes and seasonal vegetables.

The Tick Programme wants fruits and vegetables to feature strongly amongst its range of products and is working hard to get more of these products on-board.

