

The Tick Report

An Update for Health Professionals



Tick unveils nutrition standards

The benefits of eating foods meeting Heart Foundation Tick nutrition standards are now being made clearer for the general public.

New resources are being provided for health professionals to help them explain Heart Foundation Tick nutrition standards to their patients and the impact of better food choices on health.

This is an important strategic change for the programme in that it raises awareness that Tick nutrition standards are specific for each food type.

These updated print resources are available to order free through www.pickthetick.org.nz.

Tick national manager Ian Mathieson says while many consumers understand the Tick symbol indicates a product is healthier than similar foods not meeting Tick standards – the Heart Foundation has a responsibility to continue to promote this message strongly.

“The Heart Foundation Tick programme focuses on improvements that can have a significant impact on the health of New Zealanders, by setting nutrition standards in a wide range of popular foods.

“The new Tick Shopping List explains that for most Tick foods it is important to have lower levels of saturated fat, trans fat and salt...”

“Providing more specific information about Tick nutrition standards and the nutrients controlled for each food type, helps people better understand the nutritional benefits of choosing foods with the Tick,” says Mr Mathieson.

The latest Tick Shopping List explains that for most Tick foods it is important to have lower levels of saturated fat, trans fat and salt, while some must meet minimum levels of beneficial nutrients, like fibre and calcium. Tick also sets limits on energy in many food types.

While the Tick helps busy shoppers compare similar products at a glance, it is also focused on raising awareness of potentially harmful nutrients and increasing intake of beneficial nutrients.

“The Tick programme is committed to these goals and providing information for health professionals to help their patients better understand how to use Tick foods in their diet,” says Mr Mathieson.



Consumer research

Our latest consumer tracking research shows that despite economic uncertainty, the Heart Foundation Tick remains a relevant and useful guide. With 95% of main household shoppers aware of the Tick or Heart Foundation on food packaging and 81% now using the Tick to help guide purchasing decisions – the role of the Tick in choosing healthier food is growing.

Tick criteria development

Tick nutrition standards applied in New Zealand are common to the New Zealand and Australian Heart Foundations.

Dietitians and academics from both countries meet regularly to review current standards and develop criteria for new food categories.

To help health professionals understand in more detail how Tick criteria development works, Tick nutrition standards for bread, breakfast cereals, nut and seed bars, cheese and sweet biscuits are now available on the www.pickthetick.org.nz website. Criteria documents for these five Tick food types list specific nutrient requirements, the rationale for the development of the standard in each food type, and are available for download.

Tick gets the message out

A new 'Tick Tips' advertising campaign supports the Tick goal of increasing understanding of our nutrition standards.

The campaign promotes the Heart Foundation Tick as a quick and easy way to shop for healthier food. A helpful nutrition tip has been developed for each of the 55 Tick food types. Many of these suggestions contain specific information about Tick nutrition standards – for example, "Tick lean meat can have no more than 4% saturated fat and Tick lean poultry must be skinless and have no more than 3% saturated fat".

Shopping trolleys in most supermarkets across New Zealand now carry Tick Tips for a three month campaign, while a new Tick 'microsite' – www.ticktips.co.nz – has been launched to deliver more Tick Tips online.



Programme growth

Food industry commitment to meeting Tick nutrition standards is stronger than ever, with 16 new licensees and over 150 new products joining the programme in the past 12 months.

This growth has contributed to a record total of 62 food manufacturers, eight fruit and vegetable growers and over 1000 products now licensed to the Tick programme.