DECODING NUTRITION CLAIMS

While some of the claims found on food packages are tightly regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), others are not and can be misleading. This guide will help you to better understand what certain claims actually mean.

MISLEADING CLAIMS

"Grass-fed"	Refers to beef; Not defined or regulated
"Pasture-raised"	Refers to beef, pork, lamb, and dairy; Not defined or regulated
"Superfood"	Refers to foods with high levels of desirable nutrients; Not defined or regulated
"Natural"	Poorly defined and regulated. Item cannot contain added colors, artificial flavors, or synthetic substances, but can contain other "unnatural" additives, such as preservatives
"Multigrain"	May contain any amount of grains, which don't have to be whole. *(Instead, look for "100% whole grain")*
"Cage-free"	Refers to eggs; Does not consider any outdoor access; may all be packed into one small area
"Free-range"	Refers to poultry; No requirement for the amount, duration, or quality of outdoor access (animal may have very little exposure to outside)
"No hormones added"	It is illegal to use hormones in the production of poultry or pork in the U.S., so all poultry and pork items could have this claim
"Made with whole grains"	May contain any amount of whole grains (even 1%)
"Made with real fruit"	May contain any amount of real fruit (does not need to be what is pictured on the package)
"Non-GMO"	Stands for Genetically Modified Organism. Poor regulation and verification; Testing not required. Third-party verification only required for meat, poultry, and egg products

FDA REGULATED CLAIMS

Three types of claims are regulated by the FDA

1. **Nutrient content claims** describe the amount of a nutrient in a food. Examples include *"low-fat", "fat-free", "reduced fat", and "lite".*

2. **Health claims** describe how a food can help reduce risk of a disease. Examples include *"may reduce the risk of osteoporosis"* or *"reduces risk of heart disease".*

3. **Structure/function claims** describe how a food can benefit your body but do not mention disease. For example, *"builds strong bones"*

NUTRIENT CONTENT CLAIMS

Foods must meet the standards below in order to make the associated claim on a food label.

Calories

Calorie free	< 5 calories
Low calorie	< 40 calories
Reduced calorie	At least 25% less than the regular product

Sugar

Sugar free	< 0.5 g
Reduced sugar	At least 25% less sugars than the regular product
No added sugar	No sugar added during processing (may still contain sugar)

Fat

Fat-free	< 0.5 g
Low-fat	< 3 g
Reduced fat	At least 25% less than the regular product
Low in saturated fat	< 1 g of saturated fat
Lean	< 10 g fat, < 4.5 g saturated fat and < 95 mg cholesterol
Extra Lean	<5 g fat, < 2 g saturated fat and < 95 mg cholesterol
Light (lite)	At least 50% less than the regular product

Cholesterol

Cholesterol free	< 2 mg
Low cholesterol	< 20 mg
Reduced cholesterol	At least 25% less than regular product

Sodium

Sodium free	< 5 mg
Very low sodium	< 35 mg
Low sodium	< 140 mg
Reduced sodium	At least 25% less than regular product
Light (lite) sodium	At least 50% less than regular product

Fiber

Excellent source of fiber	20%+ of Daily Value (DV)
Good source of fiber	10-19% of Daily Value (DV)

Health *Plus*