

U.S. NUTRITION LABELING FOR DIETARY FIBER

Key Considerations from the 2016 Final Rules

As of May 27, 2016, FDA changed the definition of dietary fiber and its daily value, enabling Americans to more directly relate the fiber content shown on a Nutrition Facts label to potential health benefits.

The new definition of dietary fiber is based on the beneficial physiological effects in humans (examples: lowering postprandial blood glucose levels, lowering blood cholesterol levels, improving laxation) instead of the previous chemical definition.

New definition and daily value for dietary fiber:

- Whole sources that are intrinsic and intact in plants.
- Isolated or synthetic sources determined by FDA to have physiological benefits.
 - Included: 7 specific fibers, specifically beta-glucan soluble fiber, psyllium husk, cellulose, guar gum, pectin, locust bean gum, hydroxypropylmethylcellulose
 - Not included, but under FDA review and open for public comment: 26 of the most common other fibers, specifically gum acacia, alginate, apple fiber, bamboo fiber, carboxymethylcellulose, corn hull fiber, cottonseed fiber, galactooligosaccharides, inulin/oligofructose/synthetic short chain fructooligosaccharides, karaya gum, oat hull fiber, pea fiber, polydextrose, potato fibers, pullulan, rice bran fiber, high amylose corn/maize starch (resistant starch 2), retrograded corn starch (resistant starch 3), resistant wheat and maize starch (resistant starch 4), soluble corn fiber, soy fiber, sugar beet fiber, sugar cane fiber, wheat fiber, xanthan gum, xylooligosaccharides
- The daily value for dietary fiber increased from 25 grams to 28 grams based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

Implications of the new rules:

- Determining the value for dietary fiber can be tricky when only some of the fibers meet the new definition.
 - Database analysis can be used to determine the value of dietary fiber. Fibers that no longer meet the definition must not be included.
 - Laboratory analysis alone may now overstate dietary fiber. To ensure compliance, the amount of fiber that does not meet the new definition must be subtracted from the lab results.
- Soluble and insoluble fiber will continue to be voluntary nutrients on the Nutrition Facts label. All soluble and insoluble fibers must also meet the new definition of dietary fiber.
- When calculating calories, two calories per gram of soluble fiber will now be used with the 4-4-9 method. Calculating calories for insoluble fiber is unchanged: subtracted from total carbohydrates.
- Manufacturers must keep records to validate the amount of dietary fiber when the food includes fiber sources that meet the new definition and those that do not.

Compliance dates:

The compliance date for these new FDA rules is July 26, 2018 for manufacturers with \$10 million or more in annual food sales. Manufacturers with less than \$10 million have one additional year to comply (July 26, 2019).

Note: This document is intended as a broad overview. Consult the reference for additional caveats.

References: Federal Register May 27, 2016, pp. 33741-34047 and November 23, 2016, pp. 84516-84517 & 84595-84596; 21CFR 101.9(c)(6)(i)