

Nutri-Score



Misunderstandings around the Nutri-score

What it can (or cannot) provide

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* No link/conflict of interests

Misunderstanding (1): what is Nutri-Score ? what is it not ?

● *Nutri-Score is **not a binary front-of-pack nutritional** label characterizing the **overall health value** of foods in an **absolute way**.*

→ *It does not classify foods as “healthy” or “unhealthy”: **ranking A/B** do not corresponds to “**healthy**” products and **C/D/E** to « **unhealthy** » products.*

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● *Gradual, with its 5 categories of colors/letters, Nutri-Score helps consumers to compare, in an relative way, the nutritional quality of foods that have relevance to be compared in terms of consumption, use or purchasing conditions*



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Different foods belonging to different categories but with same usage (e.g for breakfast: breads, rusks, breakfast cereals, pastries,...)



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Same food (same name) according different brands (ex: Crispy chocolate chip mueslis)



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*Critics who seek to discredit Nutri-Score use often comparisons between foods that are not “comparable” in terms of use or composition, e.g **olive oil** and **breakfast cereals***



unhealthy ?



healthy ?

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At the point of purchase, consumers don't hesitate to choose between olive oil or breakfast cereals.

Nobody plan to season salad with breakfast cereals or to eat a bowl of olive oil for breakfast...



What is useful for consumers at the point of purchase ?

BREAKFAST CEREALS



ADDED FATS (vegetal and animal fats)



No A/B



Misundersanding (2): which information it provides ?

As all FOP nutrition label, Nutri-Score provides information **only on the nutritional quality of foods**, and cannot integrate all other health dimensions of foods: **degree of processing (UPF), presence of additives, neo-processed compounds, pesticides.**

As important as they are, these dimensions are not integrated into any FOP nutritional label in the world, because **it is impossible to encompass them into a synthetic indicator and therefore into a single FOP label**



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Organic foods



Ultra processed foods



Not ultra-processed foods



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Nutri-Score is not a “global health label”. Although it focuses only on nutrition composition, this already represents a lot in terms of public health (as demonstrated by numerous scientific studies showing its favourable effect on consumer choice and its expected impact on morbidity and mortality).

Prospective associations of the nutrient profiling system underlying Nutri-Score with health outcomes in cohorts: EPIC study

(European Prospective Investigation into Cancer and Nutrition: 10 European countries)

CANCER

- 471,495 adults
- median follow-up: 15.3 y

MORTALITY

- 501,594 adults
- median follow-up: 17 y

A higher **consumption of foods with less favourable Nutri-Score rating**, was associated with **higher risk of:**

→ total cancer

→ cancers of the colon-rectum, upper aero-digestive tract and stomach, lung for men, and liver and post-menopausal breast for women

→ all cause mortality

→ mortality from cancer, diseases of the circulatory, respiratory, digestive systems

Misundersanding (3): which nutrients it includes ?

A FOP nutrition label cannot include all nutrients/components of interest contained in foods: **vitamins, minerals, polyphenols, free sugars, types or fatty acids,...**

There is no nutrition FOP nutrition label in the world taking into account vitamins, minerals, polyphenols, free sugars, types of fatty acids, ...

Practical reason: data on the composition of foods in vitamins, minerals, polyphenols, free sugars, type of acids,... are not available in the nutrition declaration because they are not mandatory in the European regulations (INCO, No°1169/2011) ...

Nutrition Information

Typical Value per (100 g)

Energy	405 kcal/1695 kJ
Fat	3,1 g
of which:	
— saturates	1,8 g
Carbohydrate	86 g
of which:	
— sugars	84 g
Protein	3,3 g
Salt	0 g

Nutrients and elements used for the computation of Nutri-Score

Unfavourable elements/100g	Points	Positive elements/100g	Points
Energy (KJ)	0-10	Fruit, vegetables, legumes and nuts, olive, rapeseed and nuts oil (%)	0-5
Sugars (g)	0-10	Fibres (g)	0-5
Saturated fat (g)	0-10	Proteins (g)*	0-5
Sodium (g)	0-10		

However Nutri-Score take into account in its algorithm elements such as **fruits and vegetable** = excellent **proxys** for certain **vitamins** (such as **vitamin C** and **beta carotene**); and **proteins** = a proxy for **certain minerals** (such as **calcium** and **iron**).

Misundersanding (4): consistency with nutritional recommandations

A FOP nutrition label (which informs about the nutritional value of a specific food) does not replace food-based dietary guidelines (FBDG). **FOP nutrition label and FBDG are complementary with synergic objectives**

FBDGs give general information about consumption of broadly defined food groups



Examples:



5 a day



2 a day



> 2 a week



Salt < 5g/d



limiting salt, sugar or fat

For food groups that are recommended within FBDGs, a large variability in composition exists

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For ex, it is recommended to consume fish > 2 a week, but salmon (or other fatty fish), depending on its form of sale may contain no salt (if it is fresh) or up to 3 to 4g of salt per 100g if it is smoked (corresponding to 2/3 to 3/4 of the daily recommended amount for salt).

Examples:



Interest of Nutri-Score +++

Misundersanding (5): computed on 100g and not per serving ?

- the elements of the nutritional composition (*calories, sugars, fats, saturated fatty acids, salt, proteins, etc.*) on food packaging (the mandatory “nutrition declaration” voted in Europe in 2011) are expressed **per 100g or 100ml** (Annex XV, INCO Regulation, 2011).

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Using of a standard amount, such as 100g is the best choice, allowing a valid comparison between foods without inducing an estimation error: *compare 100 ml of olive oil to 100 ml of another oil; 100g of breakfast cereals to 100g of other cereals; 100g of Comté, to 100g Roquefort or 100 g Mozzarella.....*

Misundersanding (6): does Nutri-score penalize traditional AOP/IGP foods ?

- Many traditional products (especially with an PDO or PGI) are classified Nutri-Score A or B.
- **Even traditional, even with a PDO/PGI, a fatty, sweet or salty product remains a fatty, sweet or salty product!**
- If cheeses or cold cuts (PDO or not) are mostly classified as Nutri-Score D or E (some in C), this is related to their high content in saturated fat and salt. ***This does not indicate that they should not be consumed, but that they should be consumed in limited quantities or at a lower frequency, in accordance with public health recommendations***

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- **PDO/PGI labels** guarantee the origin of a food product, its development in a geographical area determined according to a recognized know-how respecting a specific specification - all this being very respectable – **but they do not include in their definition the notion of nutritional quality.**
- Although traditionally produced PDO/PGI foods should be supported and their methods of production promoted, information on their nutritional composition should not be obscured, as for all other foods. *It is the consumer's right to be informed !*
- Obviously nothing prevents to communicate that, among cheeses or cold cuts, it is interesting to **privilege those with PDO/PGI** over those that are not, but not by hiding their nutritional quality: **“consume less but better”**.

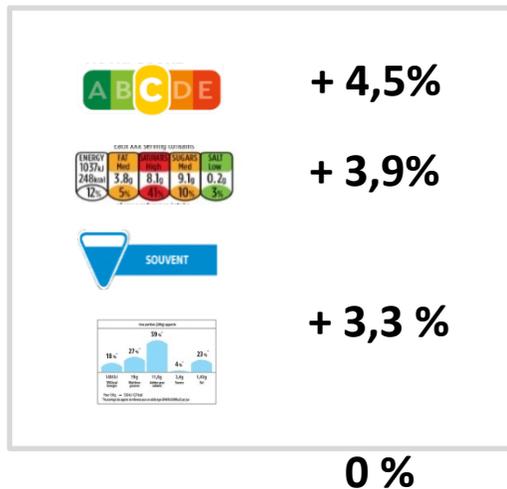
Misundersanding (7): do consumers understand and are able to use Nutri-Score properly ?

> 50 studies published (in 12 european countries and 8 out of Europe)

Impact on purchasing: nutritional quality of shopping cart

large scale experimentation in the real world

60 supermarkets; 4 FOP label tested.
Data collected: receipts (1 748 000 products)



experimental food store

691 participants ; 5 FOP label tested

	General population	Households < 2000€/month
Nutri-Score (ABCDE)	+ 9.3 %	+ 9.4 %
Energy, Fat, Protein, Sugar, Salt (table)	+ 6.6 %	+ 6.5 %
Energy, Fat, Protein, Sugar, Salt (table) - Each 100g serving contains	+ 4.8 %	+ 3.6 %
Souvent (blue triangle)	+ 3.6 %	+ 2.1 %
Other (bar chart)	+ 2.9 %	+ 2.2 %
Other (empty box)	-0.2 %	-0.2 %

Nutri-Score is associated with the highest improvement of the nutritional quality of the shopping cart. Nutri-Score performed best in households with the lowest income.

Misundersanding (8): What can we expect of Nutri-Score ?

Even if scientific works have demonstrated the interest of Nutri-Score in terms of public health, it is only **one an element of a public health nutrition policy**

Nutri-Score (as all FOP Label) **is not 100 % perfect !** it must be **regularly updated** according to the **scientific knowledge, public health data, changes in the legal framework**, etc.



Necessity to join an appropriate communication about how to use Nutri-Score properly:
 communication campaigns, health professionals (medical doctors, dieticians, pharmacists, etc.), influencers,...



For more informations about Nutri-Score:

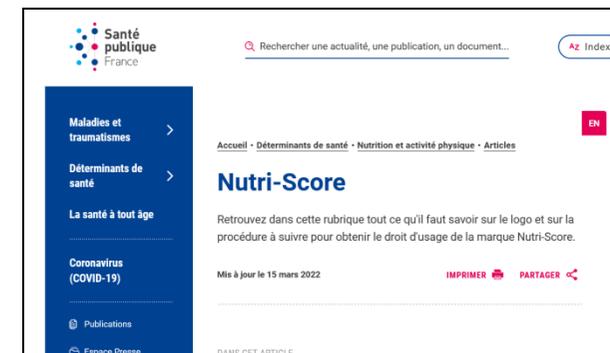
Concerning the scientific studies :

<https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/prevention-en-sante/preserver-sa-sante/nutrition/article/articles-scientifiques-et-documents-publies-relatifs-au-nutri-score>



Concerning the practical procedures how to use Nutri-Score (french, english):

<https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/determinants-de-sante/nutrition-et-activite-physique/articles/nutri-score>



Concerning founded and unfounded questions about Nutri-Score (french, english, spanish):

<https://nutriscore.blog/>

