

New Surveys Support Changes to the Nutrition Facts Panel for Added Sugars

Recent surveys provide strong evidence that underscores the public's desire for additional and clearer information on sugars, including for *a line for added sugars, with a percentage daily value and measurements in teaspoons as well as grams.*

There has long been robust support for including measurements for added sugars in teaspoons. A 2010 national telephone survey found that 72 percent of respondents favored listing teaspoons of added sugars on the label (38 percent preferred listing *only* teaspoons, while 34 percent preferred both teaspoons and grams). A mere 20 percent of respondents preferred listing sugar amounts in only grams.¹

There is also ample reason to provide a daily value (DV) for added sugars to facilitate consumer understanding. A survey in July 2014 indicated that of 1,045 consumers, 78 percent indicated that they either could not tell (58 percent) or did not know (another 20 percent) the “recommended daily limit of added sugars” from a version of a label displaying a line for added sugars but not a percentage DV for added sugars.² In contrast, when shown a label including the percentage DV, 66 percent of consumers correctly identified the information.

Our latest results from 2015 also support these labeling changes. In April 2015, we commissioned a new survey that focused on added-sugars labeling with April 2015, of 1,011 consumers.³ The results were instructive:

- **Consumers simply don't understand grams.** *Only 18 percent of consumers correctly identified the number of teaspoons of sugar in one gram of sugar, while 53 percent indicated outright that they “didn't know” the amount.*
- **Consumers cannot convert grams into the more familiar measurement of teaspoons.** *When informed that a beverage contained 40 grams of sugar per serving, and asked to convert the number to teaspoons of sugar, 40 percent of consumers indicated they did not know the answer, and only about 25 percent came within five teaspoons of the correct answer—9½ teaspoons. .*
- **Consumers prefer measurements in teaspoons.** *Respondents reviewed two nutrition labels, one with sugar expressed only as grams, the other only as teaspoons. When asked which label “more clearly conveys to you the amount of sugar in a 20-ounce bottle,” 61 percent of respondents preferred teaspoons while only 28 percent preferred the current measurement of grams. A second question asked consumers to review three labels with differences in the line for sugars, showing: grams alone, teaspoons alone and both teaspoons and grams. A majority—61 percent—preferred grams and teaspoons together, while 18 percent wanted only teaspoons and 14 percent only grams. In sum, 79 percent*

identified a desire for measurements in teaspoons, while a mere 14 percent preferred grams alone.

- **Consumers view percentage daily values as very helpful for health.** We asked whether including a percentage DV for added sugars would help to figure out how many servings of a high-sugar muffin or soft drink fits into a healthy daily diet. For the soft drink, we provided two identical labels, one with, and one without, a DV for sugars. *A stunning 80 percent of consumers identified the label including the DV as the one that would “make it easier” for them “to determine whether drinking one bottle would fit into a healthy daily diet.”* The results to the same question (with the label order switched) for the muffin were similar: *84 percent of respondents identified the label with the DV as more helpful.*

For each of those questions, there were no significant differences in the answers given by men and women, across socio-economic classes, more- or less-well-educated consumers, or among racial and ethnic groups.

¹ Center for Science in the Public Interest. (August 2, 2011). Unrealistic serving sizes understate calories, sodium, saturated fat, says CSPI. *Press Release*. Available at <http://cspinet.org/new/201108021.html>. Accessed April 23, 2015

² Center for Science in the Public Interest. (July 10-13, 2014). *Food Label Study of 1,045 Consumers by Online Caravan*.

³Center for Science in the Public Interest. (April 23-26, 2014). *Sugar Nutrition Facts Label Survey of 1011 Consumers by Online Caravan*. We would be pleased to provide the Departments with a copy of the survey.