

RM 12–NU: Food Label Dictionary

The following table lists some of the more common nutrient content claims and explains what they mean.

Nutrient Content Claims and Their Meaning*	
Keywords	What They Mean
Free	an amount so small, health experts consider it nutritionally insignificant
Sodium free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ less than 5 mg sodium**
Cholesterol free	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ less than 2 mg cholesterol, and low in saturated fat (includes a restriction on <i>trans</i> fat)** ▪ not necessarily low in total fat
Low	always associated with a very small amount
Low fat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 3 g or less fat**
Low in saturated fat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 g or less of saturated and <i>trans</i> fat combined**
Reduced	at least 25% less of a nutrient compared with a similar product
Reduced in Calories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ at least 25% less energy than the food to which it is compared
Source	always associated with a “significant” amount
Source of fibre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 g or more fibre**
Good source of calcium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 165 mg or more of calcium**
Light	<p>when referring to a nutritional characteristic of a product, it is allowed only on foods that are either “reduced in fat” or “reduced in energy” (Calories)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ explanation on the label of what makes the food “light”; this is also true if “light” refers to sensory characteristics, such as “light in colour”***

** per reference amount and per serving of stated size (specific amount of food listed in Nutrition Facts)

*** three exceptions that do not require an explanation are “light maple syrup,” “light rum,” and “light salted” with respect to fish. Note that a separate provision is made for the claim “lightly salted,” which may be used when a food contains at least 50% less added sodium compared with a similar product.

* Source: Health Canada. “Nutrient Content Claims and Their Meaning.” *Nutrition Labelling—Get the Facts!* 26 Nov. 2002. <www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/nutrition/educat/te_background-le_point-08-table1-eng.php>.

