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Unwrapped: how does your sandwich compare?

A Which? investigation, published today during National Sandwich Week, has highlighted the need for clearer front of pack nutrition labelling, including traffic lights so that consumers can easily identify healthier and less healthy choices.

The research found that you could be eating three times as much fat and double the amount of salt as the same sandwich bought elsewhere.

Researchers also found that fat and salt content varied widely and inconsistent labelling across stores meant that healthier sandwich options were not always obvious. For example:

- > Morrisons chicken salad sandwich contains 11.7g fat (amber/medium) compared with one from Waitrose which contains 6.0g fat (green/low). Waitrose uses traffic lights, Morrisons doesn't.
- > A Lidl BLT has 3.36g salt (red/high) but one from Boots has 1.5g salt (amber/medium). Boots uses traffic lights, Lidl doesn't.
- > An Aldi egg mayonnaise sandwich contains 22.3g fat (red/high) and one from Asda contains 10.1g (amber/medium). Asda uses traffic lights, Aldi doesn't.

These results show not only is there still huge scope for some retailers to reduce the fat, saturated fat and salt content of their sandwiches, but also the need for traffic light labelling to be applied across the food industry to provide consistency and allow shoppers to make informed choices.

This week the Government launched a consultation on front of pack nutrition labelling. It is essential that it now insists that all food retailers and manufacturers adopt clear, front of pack labelling, including traffic lights, the system found to best enable consumers to easily compare products with simple green, amber, or red colour coding of nutrient levels.

Six out of the 15 retailers we compared currently include the traffic light system, but the rest still do not.

Which? executive director, Richard Lloyd, says:

“With obesity levels reaching epidemic proportions, it’s more important than ever that consumers know exactly what they’re eating.



"Many retailers are already using traffic light labelling, but the rest need to catch up and do what works best for consumers. We want to see the Government insist that all food companies use traffic lights on their labels, so there's a clear, consistent system that makes it easier for people to make informed choices about what they eat."

Notes to Editors:

For a full copy of the report email meredith.barker@which.co.uk

Which? compared three types of sandwiches from 15 different retailers - Bacon, lettuce, tomato (BLT), chicken salad, and egg mayonnaise.

Bacon, lettuce and tomato (BLT)	Size*	Calories (Kcal)		Fat (g)			Saturated fat (g)			Salt (g)		
		Per 100g	Per portion	Per 100g	Per portion	TL	Per 100g	Per portion	TL	Per 100g	Per portion	TL
Aldi	185	216	400	10.9	20.2		3.2	5.9		1.17	2.16	
Asda	177	223	394	8.8	15.6		2.7	4.8		1.20	2.20	
Boots	179	224	401	9.3	17.0		2.2	3.9		0.80	1.50	
Caffè Nero	171	275	471	15.9	27.2		7.4	12.6		1.60	2.80	
The Co-operative	194	225	435	9.7	18.8		1.8	3.5		1.00	1.90	
Costa	169	235	397	9.3	15.7		2.1	3.6		1.60	2.70	
Greggs	213	258	550	13.1	28.0		-	-		1.27	2.70	
Lidl	221	242	535	12.0	26.5		3.3	7.3		1.52	3.36	
Marks and Spencer	207	225	465	10.1	20.8		2.3	4.7		1.23	2.53	
Morrisons	192	208	399	9.2	17.7		2.9	5.6		1.10	2.30	
Pret a Manger	248	199	493	11.6	28.8		2.7	6.7		1.19	2.95	
Sainsbury's	194	210	407	8.6	16.7		1.8	3.5		1.03	1.99	
Starbucks	178	248	441	12.7	22.6		3.4	6.1		1.12	2.00	
Tesco	206	235	485	10.9	22.7		2.8	5.7		1.40	2.90	
Waitrose	178	224	399	9.2	16.3		1.8	3.2		1.30	2.33	

* Where size was not given this was calculated from the nutritional information.

Chicken salad	Size*	Calories (Kcal)		Fat (g)			Saturated fat (g)			Salt (g)		
	(g)	Per 100g	Per portion	Per 100g	Per portion	TL	Per 100g	Per portion	TL	Per 100g	Per portion	TL
Asda	219	172	377	4.8	10.5		0.9	2.0		0.70	1.50	
Boots	189	176	333	4.0	7.6		0.5	0.9		0.70	1.30	
Caffè Nero	192	142	272	2.2	4.2		0.3	0.6		0.50	1.00	
The Co-operative**	197	160	315	4.2	8.3		0.8	1.6		0.70	1.38	
Costa	194	159	309	2.0	3.9		0.8	1.6		0.68	1.33	
Greggs	248	210	520	9.3	23		-	-	-	0.77	1.90	
Lidl	226	184	416	6.8	15.4		1.5	3.4		0.51	1.15	
Marks and Spencer	262	170	445	5.3	13.8		1.2	3.1		0.75	1.95	
Morrisons	216	169	365	5.4	11.7		1.4	3.0		0.80	1.80	
Sainsbury's	199	170	339	4.8	9.6		0.9	1.8		0.57	1.15	
Starbucks ***	201	156	314	3.6	7.3		0.4	0.8		0.87	1.75	
Subway	233	136	317	1.8	4.1		0.4	1.0		0.60	1.40	
Tesco	217	180	390	5.8	12.6		0.6	1.3		0.50	1.20	
Waitrose	200	152	304	3.0	6.0		0.4	0.8		0.68	1.35	

* Where size was not given this was calculated from the nutritional information.

** The Co-operative was offering 50% extra free when we bought the sandwiches so we have calculated levels for a standard pack.

*** The Starbucks sandwich was Roasted Chicken with Herb Mayonnaise. There was not an equivalent in Pret a Manger for this category.

Egg	Size*	Calories (Kcal)		Fat (g)			Saturated fat (g)			Salt (g)		
	(g)	Per 100g	Per portion	Per 100g	Per portion	TL	Per 100g	Per portion	TL	Per 100g	Per portion	TL
Aldi	177	226	401	12.6	22.3		1.6	2.8		0.91	1.61	
Asda	206	157	323	4.9	10.1		1.6	3.3		0.60	1.20	
Boots	195	176	343	6.3	12.0		1.5	3.0		0.90	1.80	
Caffè Nero	158	205	323	8.7	13.6		1.1	1.7		0.60	1.00	
The Co-operative	144	250	360	13.4	19.3		1.6	2.2		0.80	1.10	
Costa	172	219	377	8.5	14.6		1.5	2.6		0.80	1.40	
Greggs	166	247	410	9.6	16.0		-	-		1.02	1.70	
Marks and Spencer	179	195	350	8.2	14.8		3.1	5.6		0.83	1.48	
Morrisons	164	249	409	13.4	22.0		2.6	4.3		0.80	1.30	
Pret a Manger	185	231	426	12.7	23.4		2.1	3.9		0.60	1.12	
Sainsbury's	153	223	341	11.1	17.0		1.8	2.8		0.75	1.15	
Starbucks	194	192	372	7.8	15.1		1.3	2.6		0.50	1.00	
Tesco	163	190	310	9.3	15.3		1.4	2.3		1.00	1.60	
Waitrose	168	226	380	10.5	17.6		2.0	3.4		0.70	1.19	

* Where size was not given this was calculated from the nutritional information.



Food Standards Agency Traffic Light Labelling Criteria:

	Green (Low)	Amber (Medium)	Red (High)*	
Fat	≤ 3.0 g/100g	> 3.0 to ≤ 20.0 g/100g	> 20.0 g/100g	> 21.0g / portion
Saturated fat	≤ 1.5 g/100g	> 1.5 to ≤ 5.0 g/100g	> 5.0 g/100g	> 6.0g / portion
Salt	≤ 0.30 g/100g	> 0.30 to ≤ 1.50g/100g	> 1.50 g/100g	> 2.40g / portion

*The per portion criteria for red (high) apply for portion sizes over 100g so was taken into account when we applied traffic lights to the sandwiches which were all over this size.