



## Briefing

# Sandwiches unwrapped:

## The need for clear front of pack nutrition labelling

Which? research comparing three popular types of sandwich has highlighted inconsistent labelling across retailers which makes it difficult to easily identify healthier and less healthy choices. Clearer front of pack labelling including traffic lights is needed across the board so that it is easy to compare fat and salt levels.

Which? research looking at chicken salad, egg mayonnaise, and bacon, lettuce and tomato (BLT) sandwiches from the main retailers and coffee chains reveals that:

- Healthier choices are not always obvious because several retailers are still failing to provide traffic light labelling on front of pack.
- Portion sizes and nutritional content vary greatly - you could be eating over three times the fat and saturated fat and double the amount of salt, depending on which brand you choose of the same type of sandwich.
- The wide variation in nutritional content shows that there is scope for some manufacturers to offer healthier products by reducing the fat, saturated fat and salt content of their products.

Which? wants:

- Traffic light labelling displayed prominently on products by all retailers.
- Further action taken to reduce fat, saturated fat, calorie and salt levels in sandwiches, including compliance with 2012 salt reduction targets.

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## A healthy choice?

To coincide with National Sandwich Week, Which? looked at the calorie, fat, saturated fat and salt content of three of the most popular types of sandwiches from the leading retailers and coffee shop chains. We based our analysis on the nutrition information provided by the manufacturers and compared the sandwiches by applying the Food Standards Agency traffic light labelling criteria to see if levels were high, medium or low in fat, saturated fat or salt. We also compared the nutritional content per portion against guideline daily amounts (GDAs).

## Overall findings

- Several of the retailers (Asda, Boots, The Co-operative, Marks and Spencer, Sainsbury's and Waitrose) provide traffic light labelling on their products to easily indicate fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt levels, but the rest do not.
- Different portion sizes and nutritional content mean that you can eat three times the amount of fat and saturated fat depending on which sandwich you buy. Morrisons chicken salad sandwich, for example, contains 11.7g fat, whereas Costa's contains 3.9g fat; Caffè Nero's BLT sandwich contains 12.6g saturated fat, but one from Waitrose contains 3.2g.
- There is up to twice as much salt in some sandwiches than others. A Lidl BLT sandwich has 3.36g salt in it but one from Boots has 1.5g; Marks and Spencer's Roast Chicken and Salad Sandwich has 1.95g salt compared to Caffè Nero's 1g.
- The chicken salad sandwiches and egg mayonnaise sandwiches (with the exception of Gregg's egg sandwich) were meeting 2010 salt reduction targets, but BLT sandwiches from Caffè Nero, Costa, Lidl and Tesco were still higher than the target. Some brands were already compliant with the stricter salt reduction targets set for the end of 2012 for sandwiches, although not for all three types of sandwich.
- The sandwich with the lowest calorie content (Kcal) of those we looked at was a Caffè Nero chicken salad sandwich (272 Kcal); the one with the highest calorie content was a Gregg's classic BLT with 550 Kcal.

## Making choices easy

A Which? survey in February<sup>1</sup> found that reducing the fat, sugar and salt levels in foods and consistent labelling are two of the top issues that people think the Government should be tackling in order to make it easier to eat healthily.

The main mechanism to encourage action by the food industry to help tackle obesity and diet-related disease is a 'Responsibility Deal'. This covers England only, but food companies that operate across the UK are involved. It encourages companies to sign up to voluntary pledges to take action. So far the pledges have been limited in scope, but they do include salt and calorie reduction in foods. Salt reduction targets have been set for a wide range of foods including sandwiches for 2012, building on previous work around 2010 salt reduction targets. No targets have, however, yet been set for beyond 2012 and not all companies have signed up. Of those we looked at Boots, Caffè Nero, Greggs, Lidl and Starbucks have not officially pledged.

<sup>1</sup> An online survey of 1995 UK adults between 16-23 February 2012. The data was weighted to be representative of the population.

The food industry has also been asked to commit to more general reductions to the calorie content of foods. In addition, chain restaurants and coffee shops are being asked to show calorie information on menus and menu boards. Of those that we included, Greggs, Subway, Starbucks and Pret a Manger have committed to do this, but Costa and Caffè Nero have not.

Important issues that have yet to be addressed by the Government include saturated fat reductions and the need for consistent front of pack nutrition labelling on pre-packaged food which includes traffic light colour coding of nutrients. Our research shows how applying traffic lights across the board enables people to easily compare fat and salt levels.

#### Food Standards Agency Traffic Light Labelling Criteria:

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

#### Guideline Daily Amounts (Average):

	Women	Men
<b>Calories (Kcal)</b>	2000	2500
<b>Fat</b>	70g	95g
<b>Saturated fat</b>	20g	30g
<b>Salt (maximum)</b>	6g	6g

#### BLT findings

We included fifteen bacon, lettuce and tomato (BLT) sandwiches. Three brands came out as 'red' or high in fat, saturated fat and salt: Caffè Nero, Lidl and Pret a Manger.

Greggs also had reds for both fat and salt, but did not provide information about saturated fat levels. Its sandwich had the highest levels of calories per portion (550 Kcal) and the fat content would be 40 per cent of a woman's guideline daily amount (GDA). This was topped only by Pret a Manger's sandwich, which contained 28.8g fat (41 per cent of a woman's GDA). The Pret a Manger sandwich was the biggest of the sandwiches by weight (248g). The smallest was from Costa (169g). The sandwich from Costa came out as one of the lowest for calorie, fat and saturated fat content, although was not one of the best options for salt.

The supermarket sandwiches with the lowest calorie and fat content were from Asda (394 Kcal and 15.6g fat) and Waitrose (399 Kcal and 16.3g fat). The Morrisons sandwich was also relatively low in calories (399 Kcal).

Bacon increases the salt content of a sandwich. The highest levels were found in the sandwiches from Lidl (3.36g or 56 per cent of a woman's GDA), Pret a Manger (2.95g or 49.2 per cent of a woman's GDA), Tesco (2.9g or 48 per cent of a woman's GDA) and Caffè Nero (2.8g or 46.7 per cent of a woman's GDA). Some manufacturers were, however, able to



produce BLT sandwiches with much lower salt levels. The sandwich from Boots had just 1.5 g salt and The Co-operative's 1.9g.

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.

Four of the sandwiches were not yet meeting the 2010 salt reduction targets for sandwiches of this type (1.3g salt per 100g): Caffè Nero, Costa, Lidl and Tesco. Tesco and Costa has signed up to meet these targets, but Caffè Nero and Lidl have not. More positively, Boots and The Co-operative were already meeting the 2012 reduction targets, due to be met by the end of the year (1.0g salt per 100g), although Boots has not officially signed up to the pledge. Examples of simple switches that would save on calories, fat and salt are:

#### Coffee shop swaps

	Caffè Nero	Starbucks	Saving
Calories	471	441	30
Fat	27.2g	22.6g	4.6g
Saturated fat	12.6g	6.1g	6.5g
Salt	2.8g	2.0g	0.8g

#### Supermarket savings

	Lidl	Asda	Saving
Calories	535	394	141
Fat	26.5g	15.6g	10.9g
Saturated fat	7.3g	4.8g	2.5g
Salt	3.36g	2.2g	1.16g

#### Chicken salad sandwiches

We included chicken salad sandwiches or the closest equivalent. Of the fourteen we looked at, the sandwiches were 'amber' or 'green' for fat, saturated fat and salt content, except for the Greggs sandwich which was 'red' for fat, making these generally a healthier sandwich choice.

Chicken salad	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
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.

Four sandwiches were low in both fat and saturated fat, with only one coming from a supermarket: Caffè Nero, Costa, Subway and Waitrose. The sandwich with the highest calorie content was from Greggs (520 Kcal or 26 per cent of a woman's GDA). It was just beaten by Marks and Spencer for the sandwich with the highest salt content (1.95g, a third of a woman's GDA). But Lidl's sandwich was highest in fat (15.4g). This was also the highest in saturated fat (3.4g), although Greggs did not provide information on the saturated fat content.

The healthiest choices included sandwiches from Caffè Nero, one of the lowest for calories (272 Kcal), saturated fat (0.6g) and salt (1.0g). Subway (317 Kcal) and Costa (309 Kcal) sandwiches were also lowest for calories and fat (4.1g and 3.9g respectively). Caffè Nero, Waitrose, Starbucks, Boots and Subway contained the lowest levels of saturated fat.

All of the sandwiches were 'amber' or medium for salt, but met the 2010 salt reduction targets for this type of sandwich (1g salt per 100g). Eleven were already meeting the 2012 reduction targets too (0.75g salt per 100g). The three exceptions were: Greggs, Morrisons and Starbucks. Examples of simple switches that would save on calories, fat and salt are:

#### Coffee shop swaps

	Starbucks	Caffè Nero	Saving
Calories	314	272	42
Fat	7.3g	4.2g	3.1g
Saturated fat	0.8g	0.6g	0.2g
Salt	1.75g	1.0g	0.75g

## Supermarket savings

	Marks and Spencer	Waitrose	Saving
Calories	445	304	141
Fat	13.8g	6.0g	7.8g
Saturated fat	3.10g	0.8g	2.3g
Salt	1.95g	1.35g	0.6g

## Egg mayonnaise sandwiches

The nutritional content of the fourteen egg mayonnaise sandwiches we looked at varied greatly. The Aldi, Morrisons and Pret a Manger sandwiches were all red (or high) in fat and had medium levels of saturated fat and salt.

Egg	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	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.

The rest of the sandwiches had medium levels of fat and salt. Sandwiches from Boots, Caffè Nero, Costa, Sainsbury's, Starbucks and Tesco were healthier choices for saturated fat as they had low levels. The rest were amber or medium for saturated fat.

A sandwich from Asda would give you just over 10g fat, whereas sandwiches from Aldi (22.3g), Morrisons (22g) and Pret a Manger (23.4g) had double the amount: 14 per cent of a woman's GDA compared to around a third (33.4 per cent) in the case of the Pret a Manger sandwich). There was a difference of over 100 calories between some of the sandwiches. Those with the highest amount of calories were from Pret a Manger (426 Kcal), Morrisons (409 Kcal) and Aldi (401 Kcal). The sandwiches with the lowest calorie content were from Tesco (310 Kcal), Asda (323 Kcal) and Caffè Nero (323 Kcal).

Salt levels also varied from 1g (16.7 per cent of a woman's GDA) if you buy a Starbucks or Caffè Nero sandwich, compared to 1.8g (30 per cent) if you buy a sandwich from Boots. All of the sandwiches, except Greggs, were meeting the 2010 salt reduction targets (1g salt per



100g). Six had already achieved the 2012 salt reduction target (0.75g per 100g): Asda, Caffè Nero, Pret a Manger, Sainsbury's, Starbucks and Waitrose. Examples of simple switches that would save on calories, fat and salt are:

#### Coffee shop swaps

	Pret a Manger	Caffè Nero	Saving
Calories	426	323	103
Fat	23.4g	13.6g	9.8g
Saturated fat	3.9g	1.7g	2.2g
Salt	1.12g	1.0g	0.12g

#### Supermarket savings

	Morrisons	Sainsbury's	Saving
Calories	409	341	68
Fat	22g	17g	5g
Saturated fat	4.3g	2.8g	1.5g
Salt	1.3g	1.15g	0.15g

### Seeing the lights

We compared like with like by applying traffic lights to the fat and salt levels. This can be difficult in practice because some manufacturers do not use the scheme. The table below shows how the different brands apply front of pack nutrition labelling to their sandwiches.

Research conducted by the Food Standards Agency shows that the best front of pack nutrition labelling scheme is one that includes traffic lights, information about the percentage GDA and 'high', 'medium' or 'low' in words. Asda, Boots and The Co-operative stand out in particular for using the best scheme with all three elements.

#### Retailer use of front of pack nutrition labelling

	Traffic lights?	%GDA?	High, medium, low text?
Aldi	No	Yes	No
Asda	Yes	Yes	Yes
Boots	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Caffè Nero	No	No	No
The Co-operative	Yes	Yes	Yes*
Costa	No	No	No
Greggs	No	No	No
Lidl	No	Yes	No
Marks and Spencer	Yes	Yes	No
Morrisons	No	Yes	No
Pret a Manger	No	No	No
Sainsbury's	Yes	No**	No
Starbucks	No	No	No
Tesco	No	Yes	No
Waitrose	Yes***	Yes	No

\*now being included on newer packaging.

\*\* Sainsbury's show %GDA (and traffic lights) on back of pack but do not include %GDA on the front.

\*\*\* currently on the bottom rather than the front of pack, but Waitrose have told us it will be moved back to the front.



## Conclusions

Our research shows that front of pack nutrition labelling is inconsistent and does not make it easy to compare the nutritional content of similar types of sandwiches. The Government and food industry need to help people make healthier choices by ensuring:

- Traffic light labelling is displayed prominently on all products.
- Further action is taken by manufacturers to reduce fat, calorie and salt levels in sandwiches, including compliance with 2012 salt reduction targets.

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