



Changes to the Health Star Rating system

Fact sheet for food retailers and manufacturers

The Health Star Rating (HSR) is a front-of-pack labelling system that rates the overall nutrition profile of packaged foods with a rating from ½ a star to 5 stars. It provides a quick, easy, standardised way to compare similar packaged foods. The more stars, the healthier the choice.

The HSR system is voluntary, however there are clear uptake targets. The changes in the Recommendations of the Health Star Rating System Five Year Review were due to be adopted by 14 November 2022, with an additional year for long shelf-life products, until 14 November 2023.

Uptake will be measured¹ against the following targets:

50 per cent uptake across intended products by 14 November 2023

60 per cent uptake across intended products by 14 November 2024

70 per cent uptake across intended products by 14 November 2025

If the HSR system continues to perform well but the final uptake target is not met, consideration will be given to introducing a mandatory system subject to government requirements.

What do manufacturers need to know?

There have been changes to:

The permitted HSR logos – the energy-only icon is no longer permitted

Automatic Health Star Ratings – there is new advice for specific products

The Health Star Ratings Calculator – total sodium and sugars are penalised more strongly and dairy categories have been refined

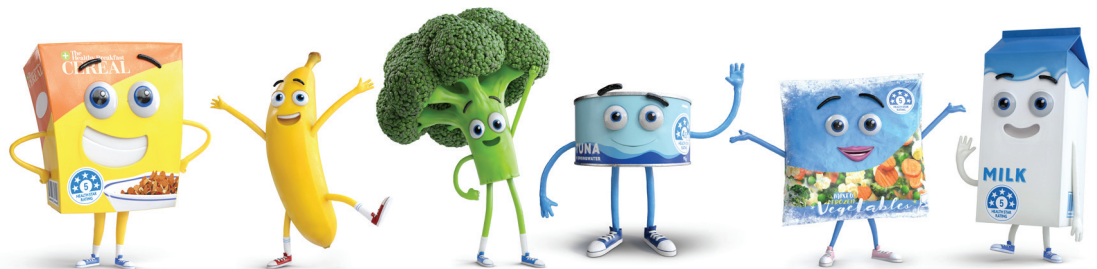
By now, manufacturers should have:

Removed the energy-only icon from all products and replaced with a permitted HSR graphic

Determined whether products have changed categories

Re-run products through the revised HSR Calculator to see if existing HSR labels need to be updated

Applied any updated ratings to all new labels being produced



¹ To find out what packaged foods are intended and permitted to carry the HSR system visit healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/target-and-intended-products

Overview of recent changes

The following changes were made to the system in 2020. These were due to be implemented by November 2022.

Changes to the logo

The HSR system no longer uses graphic Option 5 (the energy-only icon).



Automatic Health Star Ratings

Fresh and minimally processed fruit and vegetables

Businesses may apply an automatic 5 star rating to fresh and minimally processed fruit and vegetables. Fresh and minimally processed fruit and vegetables means:

- all whole, fresh fruit (except coconut) and vegetables
- fungi and legumes (except peanuts) as sold with no processing
- these same products that have only been peeled, cut and/or surface treated and/or blanched and/or frozen (not dried), or canned without the addition of fat, sugars/sweeteners or salt.

For unpackaged fruit and vegetables, businesses are encouraged to communicate the 5 star rating on in-store banners, shelf wobblers and posters, or through marketing activities.

Unsweetened flavoured waters

To better discern water from high energy drinks an automatic 4.5 star rating now applies for all unsweetened flavoured waters. Unsweetened flavoured waters are packaged beverages similar in nutritional profile to water that may contain only:

- carbon dioxide, whether added or naturally occurring

- permitted flavouring substances (as defined by Standard 1.1.2-2 of the Code)
- mineral salts at Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) (Schedule 16 of the Code)
- additives that provide a specific safety or stability function at GMP (Schedule 16 of the Code),

and must not contain:

- added sugars, sweeteners, colours, sodium, caffeine, quinine, or any other ingredient that contains energy and is not expressly permitted above (e.g. protein).

Changes to the HSR Calculator

Changes to the HSR Calculator mean that total sugars and sodium are more strongly penalised:

- the points table for application of baseline points for sugar in HSR categories 1D², 2³ and 2D⁴ has been extended to 25 points (from the previous 22).
- the upper limit of the points table for application of baseline points for sodium in categories 1D, 2 and 2D has been reduced from a maximum of 30 baseline points for sodium content >8,106mg/100g to a maximum of 30 baseline points for sodium content >2,700mg/100g.

Dairy

Dairy product categories have been refined. HSR categories 2D and 3D⁵ have been rescaled in the HSR Calculator – this means that ratings of products in these categories may have changed:

- many dairy products have increased ratings under the revised system, an approach that recognises the important role dairy foods play within a balanced diet.

² HSR category 1D captures dairy beverages that contain sufficient calcium to meet the requirements for a 'source of calcium' claim under Standard 1.2.7 of the Code. Category 1D may include milk and dairy beverage alternatives derived from legumes, cereals, nuts or seeds, providing they contain at least 100mg calcium per 100ml.

³ HSR category 2 captures all foods other than those in Category 1, 1D, 2D, 3 or 3D.

⁴ HSR category 2D captures dairy and permitted dairy alternative foods derived from legumes (not including those included in Category 1D or 3D).

⁵ HSR category 3D captures cheese and processed cheese as defined in Standard 2.5.4 of the Code (with calcium content >320mg/100g). Category 3D may include cheese alternatives derived from legumes providing they meet the criterion for 3D foods for calcium content.

- custards, evaporated milks, dairy-based desserts (such as mousses, crème caramels, panna cottas) cream cheeses, creams, sour creams, crème fraiche and mascarpone are now considered Category 2D products (rather than Category 2).

Jellies and ice confections

Changes to the way star ratings are calculated for HSR Category 1 mean that ratings of products in these categories may have changed:

- jellies and water-based ice confections now fall into HSR Category 1⁶ (Non-dairy beverages, jellies and water-based ice confections)

Fruit and vegetable juices

The maximum rating for juices low in sugar is now 4 stars, and juices high in sugar (including naturally occurring sugars) may receive a lower rating of 2.5 stars. Fruit drinks may score even lower.



Questions to ask yourself when using the HSR calculator:

Is your product intended or permitted to carry the HSR? (Refer to the Health Star Rating system Calculator and Style Guide for support)

Have you chosen the correct category for the food product?

Have you entered all nutrient values correctly?

Have you entered values (including zero values) in all spreadsheet fields?

Has fruit, vegetables, nuts and legumes (FVNL) content been calculated correctly?

Support

For more information on the HSR system and recent changes, visit healthstarrating.gov.au.

For information on how to categorise and calculate an HSR, access the Health Star Rating system Calculator and Style Guide updated on October 2021 at healthstarrating.gov.au/internet/healthstarrating/publishing.nsf/Content/guide-for-industry.

Questions about the Guide and use of the HSR graphic can be directed to the Front-of-Pack Labelling Secretariat. Email frontofpack@health.gov.au or call 1800 099 658.

⁶ HSR category 1 captures beverages (other than dairy beverages and alcoholic beverages), jellies and water-based ice confections.

For more information visit healthstarrating.gov.au



The Health Star Rating

A joint Australian, state and territory governments initiative in partnership with industry, public health and consumer groups.