

# Do nutritional labels work?

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According to Denny Bros Ltd, the inventor of the Fix-a-Form® booklet labels, the UK government turned to informational labelling to help tackle the growing levels of obesity among Britons. Many products now have traffic-light labels on the front of their packaging, showing the levels of ingredients, such as salt and fat, in the product. However, some have suggested that these red, amber and green designs don't work.





## **Traffic-light labelling failure?**

The most recent person to speak out against the government's policy was Professor Jack Winkler, a visiting lecturer at University College London and MRC Human Nutrition Research Cambridge. Speaking at the Food Matters Live show in London, he claimed that policies such as traffic-light labelling have been a failure.

## **Little incentive for companies to make healthier products**

From the show, FoodManufacture.co.uk reported that Professor Winkler said: 'The trouble with the traffic light system is it only has three categories: red, amber and green. What this means is that for a company to change from red to amber or amber to green, it's often impossible without completely changing the product.'

## **Reliance on consumers making informed choices**

This means that people are relying on the labels to influence customer behaviour, rather than making companies provide healthier products. The idea is that people will try to avoid products with an overabundance of red or amber labels, which would gradually lead to them eating more healthily, in theory.

## **...but are the traffic light labels effective?**

However, this is impractical as many people already know that certain items are healthy or unhealthy, or they have little

choice in what they buy because of money worries or a lack of culinary information. Because of this, these specific informational labels are not having much of an effect on the nation's health.

## A bit of lateral thought

Companies producing healthy products can use Fix-a-Form® informational booklet labels – locally available from Pyrotec PackMedia, the South African Licensee for Fix-a-Form International – much more effectively than just relying on the traffic-light scheme. There is an opportunity here to be taken advantage of, and to help people eat more healthily. For example, companies can include on their products' recipes or useful tips on healthy eating in a handy Fix-a-Form® informational booklet label. This type of labelling can hold a lot of information without taking up any extra space, making it perfect for holding advice on how to eat well.

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