

Q&A: FDA's 2022 Proposed Rule Regarding "Healthy" Claims

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Whole avocados can be labeled as "healthy," but frozen avocado pieces might not be labeled as "healthy" under FDA's recent proposal to update the implied "healthy" nutrient content claim on food labels (the "**Proposed Rule**"). FDA wants to encourage consumption of nutrient dense foods and limit added sugar, sodium, and saturated fat intake, but it's clear that FDA has significant work ahead if it wants to create a clearer, workable standard for the future use of terms like "healthy," "healthier," and "healthful" on food labels.

Why is FDA revisiting "healthy"?

It's time! FDA's current regulation dates back to 1994, a time when consumers—and FDA—were focused on individual nutrients (remember the low fat craze?), not healthful dietary patterns and nutrient-dense foods. FDA has been asked over the past six years to modernize the standards for a "healthy" implied nutrient content claim to better reflect current nutrition science. The Proposed Rule, if finalized, would update FDA's standards for the use of a "healthy" nutrient content claim on food labels to better account for how the different nutrients in various food groups work together to create healthful dietary patterns.

Why else is FDA revisiting "healthy"?

To improve public health. FDA is advancing some very laudable goals and its efforts are to be commended. Industry asked for a more modern standard, and FDA is listening. More than that, "FDA seeks to improve dietary patterns . . . to help reduce the burden of nutrition-related chronic diseases and advance health equity as nutrition-related chronic diseases are experienced disproportionately by certain racial and ethnic minority groups and those with lower socioeconomic status." FDA wants to empower consumers to make better choices.

Do food companies need to make any changes now?

No. The Proposed Rule describes FDA's goals for revising the definition of "healthy" in food labeling, and any potential compliance date is far off—at least three and a half years away, and likely, much further away. Stakeholders should continue complying with FDA's current requirements³—as expanded by FDA's current enforcement discretion⁴—unless and until the Proposed Rule becomes effective as a Final Rule.

Read the full article [here](#).