

Unilever Global Nutrition & Ice cream portfolio assessment against 6 Nutrient Profiling Models (NPMs) and own NPM

Introduction

At Unilever, we want to help people enjoy healthier, affordable, and nutritious diets. To achieve this, we use a Nutrient Profiling Model (NPM) to assess and report the nutritional quality of our food and beverage portfolio, to inform how we reformulate our products, and to inspire our product innovation programmes. As a global business with a presence in over 190 countries, we have used – for several years – just one NPM to do this, called Highest Nutritional Standards (HNS), which is a Unilever-developed system based on WHO dietary guidelines. Over the last decade, we have more than doubled the proportion of our products which meet HNS criteria, and we are committed to continue to improve the nutritional quality of our products.

HNS is a rigorous and effective NPM. Nevertheless, we recognise that it is not the only one. In fact, there are dozens of NPMs currently in use worldwide. Importantly, since different NPM use different methodologies to assess the nutritional make-up of food, they often arrive at different conclusions about the healthiness of the same product. They are often based on local dietary requirements and consumption habits, and each have their own strengths and weaknesses in their methodology.

In March 2022 we committed to set an example by expanding our disclosure of our progress against our Nutrition commitments by doing so not only based on our HNS model, but against six other, government endorsed NPMs from different geographies. We have chosen to do this for our global food and beverage portfolio and for our top 16 markets, based on both volume and value of sales.

We believe that by taking this approach, we will not only provide greater transparency to our consumers and our wider stakeholders about the progress we are making, but that it will inform and improve our approach – and that of the wider industry – to driving positive public health impact for our consumers worldwide.

The characteristics of the six NPMs in scope

The six additional NPMs which we have assessed our portfolio against use different algorithms to determine a food product's "healthiness score".

The first three NPMs use a "compensatory" approach. These are:

- High Fat Sugar Salt (HFSS), which is used in the United Kingdom
- NutriScore (NS), which is used in several European countries
- Health Star Rating (HSR), which is used in Australia and New Zealand.

In this compensatory approach, the overall healthiness of a product is determined by an algorithm which incentivises the inclusion of more healthy nutrients, because they help to “compensate” for the presence of ‘nutrients to limit’ in the product’s final score. Under this model, the product’s ingredients and nutrients are assessed per 100g or 100ml of the product. A key challenge with this approach is that where products are consumed in significantly larger or smaller portion sizes than this quantity, it can lead to a product healthiness score which does not reflect the reality of the consumer’s intake.

These NPMs use different scoring systems to judge products:

- HFSS uses a binary “HFSS” or “non-HFSS” classification.
- NutriScore classifies products on a scale from A-E.
- HSR grades products on a scale of 0-5 stars, in 0.5-star increments.

In assessing Unilever’s portfolio against these NPM, products were considered “healthy” if they achieved a score of “non-HFSS”, A&B in NutriScore, or ≥ 3.5 in HSR.

The fourth NPM used was the Chile warning logo. In this model – like those listed above - nutrient criteria are applied on a per 100g or 100ml basis, but according to the product’s salt, saturated fat, sugar, and calorie profile. The challenges identified previously with a per 100g / 100ml approach also apply in this model.

In assessing Unilever’s portfolio against this NPM, products were considered “healthy” if there was no warning label applied to any of the four nutrients.

The final two NPM used a “pass or fail” approach, based on product category specific criteria. These were:

- Choices 5 level criteria, an evolution of Choices International criteria used as foundation for several country Healthy Choice Logos
- Healthy Choice Symbol (HCS), used in Singapore.

In this approach, a product’s healthiness score is determined based on its performance against specific criteria for nutrients ‘to limit’, and the presence in specific product groups of calcium, fibre or wholegrain. The role of the product in the diet, the appropriate serving size and frequency of consumption are also considered.

These NPM also use different scoring systems to judge products:

- Choices classifies products on a T1 to T5 basis
- HCS use a binary “compliant” or “non-compliant” approach.

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In assessing Unilever's portfolio against these NPM, products were considered "healthy" if they achieved a Choices score of T1 or T2 and were "compliant" in the HCS model.

The "pass or fail" approach used by Choices and HCS is very similar to that used by Unilever's HNS model, which is also determined based on a product's performance against specific criteria for nutrients 'to limit'. The role of the product in the diet, the appropriate serving size and frequency of consumption are also considered. However, in the HNS model, some products can be rewarded with better scores if they are downsized, because products in the ice cream and snack categories are measured based on a "per serving" approach, rather than product criteria per 100g or 100ml.

- Like HCS, HNS also uses a binary "compliant" or "non-compliant" scoring system to judge products.

The full methodologies behind each of the seven NPMs can be found in the footnotes at the end of this document.

Assessment of portfolio

The assessment of Unilever's foods, ice cream and beverage portfolio against the different NPM, was based on the audited 2021 dataset used to report Unilever's nutrition commitment to reduce salt, sugar and calories ([Reducing salt, sugar and calories | Unilever](#)). Unilever product groups were mapped to the product groups defined in each NPM, and the scoring rules of the individual NPMs were applied to determine the "healthiness" scores of the products. This process resulted in more than 600,000 data points being assessed.

The results have been presented based on the percentage "healthiness" score per NPM at a global level and for 16 markets, based on volume in tons sold as well as turnover. The assessment shows a highly divergent outcome in "healthiness" scores to the different NPMs, which is related to the nature of the algorithm as explained above.

Looking to the future

There is currently no globally aligned approach to set a harmonised "healthiness" score for food and beverage products. We look to the industry and stakeholders to work together to create an industry-wide standard Nutrient Profile Model that every company in the food industry can report to, to incentivize reformulation at scale in order to enhance the impact on public health.

Nutrient Profile Models

Assesment of Global Nutrition & Ice cream Portfolio



HFSS



2021	Non-HFSS	A+B	≥3.5	No Chile Warning Labels	T1 + T2	HCS compliant	HNS compliant
Volume							
Global	35%	19%	17%	43%	63%	43%	63%
Australia	53%	15%	14%	50%	83%	49%	75%
Belgium	78%	13%	10%	77%	81%	71%	80%
Brazil	14%	12%	12%	13%	42%	10%	86%
China	13%	12%	3%	12%	31%	12%	68%
France	72%	9%	9%	71%	81%	66%	80%
Germany - Austria - Switzerland	47%	7%	5%	44%	70%	43%	56%
India	54%	53%	53%	51%	62%	50%	58%
Indonesia	4%	4%	4%	4%	20%	4%	86%
Italy	32%	12%	11%	29%	60%	25%	48%
Mexico	32%	27%	25%	39%	68%	16%	69%
Netherlands	63%	17%	17%	61%	72%	47%	68%
Philippines	22%	21%	19%	21%	62%	17%	58%
South Africa	66%	55%	55%	60%	74%	59%	83%
Türkiye	56%	9%	9%	56%	86%	54%	68%
United Kingdom - Ireland	31%	15%	15%	34%	59%	33%	56%
United States	23%	20%	20%	46%	68%	53%	64%

Nutrient Profile Models

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2021	Non-HFSS	A+B	≥3.5	No Chile Warning Labels	T1 + T2	HCS compliant	HNS compliant
Turn Over (excluding Pepsi-Lipton Join Venture Portfolio)							
Global	30%	26%	24%	29%	57%	23%	55%
Australia	20%	17%	15%	16%	59%	7%	38%
Belgium	31%	19%	13%	30%	43%	13%	34%
Brazil	9%	8%	7%	7%	44%	4%	73%
China	22%	22%	7%	22%	42%	21%	64%
France	28%	21%	20%	26%	55%	17%	47%
Germany - Austria - Switzerland	16%	11%	9%	15%	45%	10%	27%
India	81%	79%	79%	81%	85%	79%	82%
Indonesia	10%	10%	10%	10%	33%	10%	82%
Italy	13%	11%	9%	10%	51%	6%	29%
Mexico	39%	34%	31%	37%	65%	6%	59%
Netherlands	30%	22%	21%	28%	46%	7%	40%
Philippines	21%	21%	19%	20%	54%	13%	59%
South Africa	61%	59%	60%	46%	57%	44%	73%
Türkiye	30%	23%	23%	29%	81%	21%	41%
United Kingdom - Ireland	29%	25%	24%	32%	52%	31%	44%
United States	19%	15%	14%	16%	59%	11%	54%

References to NPMs:

- High Fat Sugar Salt [Microsoft Word - Nutrient Profiling template.doc \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- NutriScore <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/determinants-de-sante/nutrition-et-activite-physique/articles/nutri-score>
- Health Star Rating [Health Star Rating - Guidance for Industry](#)
- Chile Warning logo <http://web.minsal.cl/ley-de-alimentos-nuevo-etiquetado-de-alimentos/>
- Choices 5 level criteria [Development of the Choices 5-Level Criteria to Support Multiple Food System Actions - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)
- Heathy Choice Symbol Singapore <https://www.healthhub.sg/sites/assets/Assets/PDFs/HPB/Food/hcs-nutrient-guidelines-april-2020.pdf>
- Highest Nutritional Standards [unilever-nutrition-standards-booklet.pdf](#)

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