

Supplemental information added as part of nutrition labelling: sugar alcohols content

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The main objective of European Regulation No. 1169/2011 is to establish a high level of health protection for consumers and to ensure that consumers are appropriately informed about the food they consume in accordance with their right to information. This regulation added several components to the list of components on a nutrition label. As a result a nutritional label may declare the amounts of one or more of the following components: monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fatty acids, sugar alcohols, starch, fibre, minerals and vitamins. In particular, there is an increasing interest in the consumption of sugar alcohols due to their lower energy value compared with sugars (they are metabolised in a different way) and because of their potential health benefits. Sugar alcohols (polyalcohols or polyols) are hydrogenated carbohydrates. The most common polyols present in

food are glycerol, lactitol, maltitol, mannitol, isomalt, erythritol, sorbitol and xylitol.



As most of them display a slightly lower sweetness compared to sucrose, they are used in similar amounts to sugar to replace the bulk and (part of) the sweetness of sugar. High-intensity (also called high-potency) sweeteners (such as saccharin, cyclamate, aspartame.) in low amounts might be used to adjust the sweetness profile of such lowcalorie products to that of

products sweetened with regular sugar. Sugar alcohols are non-cariogenic or, in case of xylitol, even anti-cariogenic, have a low glycemic index and insulin index (useful in obesity and diabetes), are digested more slowly and also have osmotic properties showing water holding properties beneficial to the colon. Due to their laxative effects the approval is restricted and the products with more than 10% added polyols must bear the words "excessive consumption may produce laxative effects". Eurofins offers different state-of-the-art methods for the detection and quantification of sugar alcohols and similar components in different food matrices.

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