

Unilever's Position on Nutrient Profiling Models



Unilever

UNILEVER'S POSITION ON NUTRIENT PROFILING MODELS

Key messages

- We believe that Nutrient Profiling Models (NPMs) play a critical role in determining the nutritional quality of foods, provided they meet certain principles.
- To drive innovation and reformulation, we employ our own science-based NPMs, which are based on WHO dietary guidance and other international guidance and are shown to move intakes closer to recommendations.
- However, there is not one definition of "healthy" and different NPMs can yield different results. Therefore, Unilever is the first company to disclose its portfolio to six external NPMs annually.

Unilever's Position on Nutrition Profiling Models

We believe that nutrient profiling, the categorisation of foods according to their nutritional composition, plays a critical role in determining the nutritional quality of foods promoting health and guiding various aspects such as product reformulation, responsible marketing and advertising, nutrition front-of-pack labelling and fiscal measures. Nowadays there are many external NPMs. However, there is not one definition of "healthy" and different NPMs can yield different results.

Unilever's guiding principles for NPMs are:

- Scientifically sound, reflecting government-endorsed internationally accepted dietary guidelines.
- All-inclusive for packaged food and beverage products.
- Focused on key nutrients of public health concern and considering positive nutrients and/or ingredients for relevant product categories but avoiding compensation.
- Providing a good within product group differentiation to show (small) changes in nutritional quality.
- Providing a good between product group differentiation to acknowledge the role of the product in the diet.

Our principles are best reflected when a nutrient profile is product group-specific or based on serving sizes, and not based on a calculation per 100g / 100ml of the product while using the same benchmarks across all products or a limited set of product groups. Serving-based nutrient profiles better reflect what people consume; but this

approach requires regulated serving sizes. A product group-specific nutrient profile considers the role of the product in the diet, so inherently reflects frequency of consumption as well as appropriate serving sizes. Both options result in better alignment with dietary guidelines. We recommend having a set of at least nine products groups including fats, dairy, cereal/carbohydrate, protein (meat/fish and its alternatives), fruit and vegetables, meals/composite dishes, snacks/treats, sauces/condiments and beverages. These are the commonly used product groups in different nutrient profiles.

Our Actions

Unilever has a track record in the use of nutrient profiling to drive product improvement for more than 20 years. We currently have two separate sets of standards: Unilever's Science-based Nutrition Criteria (USNC) for nutrients to limit and Positive Nutrition Standards (PNS) for ingredients and nutrients with a positive health impact. We evaluated the potential effect of these standards using scientific modelling and found that reformulation of food products in line with our standards would bring intakes substantially closer to the daily recommendations. Standard setting and modelling results are published in peer-reviewed journals^{1,2}. Our NPMs continue to form the solid basis for our reformulation and innovation agenda, as well as our Responsible Marketing principles, Healthy Recipe Framework, and Nutrition & Health Claims. We actively advocate our principles and share our expertise and experience in nutrient profiling and product improvement.

Since 2022, we also disclose the performance of our product portfolio against six different externally endorsed NPMs, thereby setting a new benchmark in transparency. We are calling on the industry and stakeholders to work together on an industry-wide NPM approach which every food company can use.

¹[Dotsch-Klerk et al. Nutrients 2022](#)

²[Dotsch-Klerk et al. Frontiers in Nutrition 2023](#)