OVERVIEW
This topic corresponds with Unit A2 1: Consumer Issues of the CCEA GCE Home Economics specification.

Aim
The aim of this topic is to teach students on how to use nutrition information on Front of Pack (FoP) labelling schemes.

Learning Intentions
At the end of this topic students should be able to interpret nutrition information on Front of Pack (FoP) labels and be able to use this information to plan a healthy balanced diet and make healthy food choices.

Resources
- Classroom slides
- Activity sheets
- Additional Teacher’s Notes

SLIDE 1
The eatwell plate

Screen Description
This screen shows an image of the eatwell plate.

Teacher
To begin ask the students what is the eatwell plate and what are the five food groups that make up the plate.

Additional Teacher’s Notes
There are five food groups:
- fruit and vegetables
- bread, rice, potatoes and pasta and other starchy foods
- milk and dairy foods
- meat, fish, egg, beans and other non-dairy sources of protein
- food and drinks high in fat and/or sugar.

We need to eat more from some groups than others.

For more information about the eatwell plate visit:
http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/eatwell
http://www.nidirect.gov.uk/eatwellguide.pdf (page 11-12)
**SLIDE 2**

**Making healthy food choices – the label link**

**Screen Description**
This screen explains to students how food labels can be used to make healthy food choices.

**Teacher**
Before showing the slide ask the students how food labels can help a consumer make healthy food choices. Discuss the content of this slide with students showing the association between using the label and making healthy food choices.

**Additional Teacher’s Notes**
When choosing a healthy diet one of the key things to do is to cut down on fat (especially saturated fat), salt and added sugars. The consumer might:

- use the label to choose a food from the meat, fish and alternatives group that has less fat, for example, minced meat
- read the label before buying frozen vegetables, for example, the label may show that broccoli with sauce has more fat than plain broccoli.

Food labels can be used to make healthier, safer and more informed food choices when choosing between products. Food labels can assist understanding on what nutrients manufactured food products contain. The ingredients label and nutrition panel on the back of pack can help to make healthier choices. Consumers can find useful information on food labels about particular nutrients. For example, teenage girls, who often eat fewer calories than teenage boys, may not get enough calcium and iron. They can use the label to help them choose foods that give a good supply of those nutrients.

The use of traffic lights and Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) on the front of pack, where available can help in the choice of foods with less fat, salt and sugars. If the consumer learns how to moderate and balance their food choices, they can eat healthily every day.
Slide 3
Front of Pack labelling schemes

Screen Description
This screen looks at Front of Pack labelling schemes and their role in making healthy food choices.

Teacher
Introduce the Front of Pack labelling schemes to students highlighting the two different types, that is, traffic light labelling and Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs).

Resources
Activity 1 – Ask students to complete this in class or as homework.

Additional Teacher’s Notes
Front of Pack labelling
- Front of Pack (FoP) nutrition labelling provides information at a glance about key nutrients on pre-packed foods sold in retail outlets to provide consumers with information on foods that can help choose a healthy diet and those which are recommended to be eaten in moderation or less often
- It is voluntary, with most of the UK’s large retailers and many manufacturers displaying this information on nutrients – fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt
- FoP labelling is most useful for composite processed foods for example, sandwiches, prepared or ready meals, burgers, sausages, pies, pastries, breaded foods
- There are two main FoP labelling schemes used in the UK. Both schemes include the amount of nutrients in grammes per portion of food. The systems are:
  a) Traffic light colour coded schemes which highlight levels of key nutrients that can be found accompanied by the text high, medium and low
  b) Labels with percentage Guideline Daily Amounts (without traffic light colours) which provide information on the amount of nutrient per portion of product as a percentage of GDA.

Some labels provide a traffic colour code (with or without text) and Guideline Daily Amount (percentage GDA).

In 2010 the Food Standards Agency surveyed consumers to find out their opinions of the different FoP nutrition labels being used in the UK. Consumers preferred three key elements which combined aspects of both the traffic light and GDA schemes.

The preferred elements were:
- the text (high, medium and low)
- the traffic light colour coding
- the percentage of GDA.

Having more than one label was found to cause difficulty for consumers, which highlighted the need for a single approach.

Slide 4
Front of Pack labelling

Screen Description
This screen shows images of four Front of Pack (FoP) food labels using the traffic light system and Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs).

Teacher
Initiate a discussion with students by asking them to name the various FoP labelling schemes shown on the slide, that is, traffic light labelling and Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA).
SLIDE 5
Traffic light labelling

Screen Description
This screen looks at Front of Pack labelling schemes and their role in making healthy food choices.

Teacher
Explain to students what traffic light labelling is used for, what the colours mean and why it is important.

Resource
Activity 2 – Ask students to complete this in class or as homework.

Additional Teacher’s Notes
Traffic light labelling has been developed by the Food Standards Agency.

Food products which display traffic light labels on the front of the pack show the consumer at a glance if the food they are thinking about buying has high, medium or low amounts of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt, helping the consumer to choose the healthier option.

In addition to traffic light colours, the consumer will also see the number of grammes of fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt in what the manufacturer or retailer suggests as a ‘serving’ of the food.

What do the colours mean?
A red light on the front of pack means the food is high in something consumers should try to cut down on in their diet. It is fine to have the food occasionally, or as a treat, but the consumer should watch how often they choose these foods, or try eating them in smaller amounts.

An amber light, means the food isn’t high or low in the nutrient, so this is an acceptable choice most of the time. The consumer might want to go for green for that nutrient some of the time.

A green light means the food is low in that nutrient. The more green lights, the healthier the choice. Many of the foods with traffic light colours that the consumer sees in shops will have a mixture of red, amber and green. So, when choosing between similar products, the consumer should choose foods with more greens and ambers, and fewer reds, to ensure healthier choices.

What is the criteria for traffic light labelling?
The traffic light colour approach to nutritional signpost labelling requires criteria that define the green(low), amber (medium) and red (high) boundaries for the key nutrients fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt.

Which food products display traffic light labelling?
Traffic light colours are used on processed convenience foods such as ready meals, pizzas, sausages, burgers, pies, sandwiches and breakfast cereals. This is because consumers have told the Food Standards Agency (FSA) that they find it difficult to understand the nutritional content of these types of foods.

Why is traffic light labelling important?
Traffic light colours can help consumers get the balance right by helping them to choose between products and keep a check on the amount of foods high in fat, saturated fat, sugars and salt that they are eating. Consumers can use signpost labelling to help make informed decisions about healthier food choices.
**SLIDE 6**

**Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs)**

**Screen Description**
This screen shows an image of a Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) label explained in detail.

**Teacher**
Discuss the GDA label with students focusing on why it is used and its benefits.

**Additional Teacher’s Notes**
The GDA scheme was developed by the Institute of Grocery Distribution (IGD). For more information on the IGD visit: http://www.igd.com/index.asp?id=1&fid=6&sid=30

**What are GDAs?**
Guideline Daily Amounts (GDAs) are guidelines about the approximate amount of particular nutrients required for a healthy diet.

GDAs provide the approximate amount of calories, fat, saturated fat, carbohydrates, total sugars, protein, fibre, salt and sodium required for a healthy diet.

GDAs help consumers make sense of the nutrition information provided on food labels. They translate the science into consumer friendly information, providing guidelines on packs that help consumers put the nutrition information they read on food labels into the context of their overall diet.

**Who are GDAs for?**
- GDAs have been developed for men and women, over 18 years of age of normal weight and for those who are trying to maintain a healthy weight
- GDAs have been established for children

**What are the values based on?**
GDAs are based on government recommendations for a healthy balanced diet.

**Benefits of GDAs**
- Provide companies with a consistent approach to nutrition labelling
- Provide consumers with additional information which they can use to gain a better understanding of their daily intake of specific nutrients
- Help consumers make sense of complex information already provided on the back of packs
- Help consumers achieve a balanced diet

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**SLIDE 7**

**How to calculate GDAs**

**Screen Description**
This screen explains where GDA labels can be found on food products and how to calculate GDAs. It displays two images:
- a table that explains GDAs for adults and children
- a formula for calculating the contribution a nutrient makes towards a GDA.

**Teacher**
Discuss the information on the slide with the students.

**Resource**
Activity 3 – Ask students to complete this in class or as homework.
Fortified foods

Screen Description
This screen gives a brief explanation of what fortified foods are. It also displays images of sample fortified foods products.

Teacher
Discuss the content of this slide with students asking them why it would be necessary to fortify foods.

Additional Teacher’s Notes
Food fortification or enrichment is the process of adding micronutrients (essential trace minerals and vitamins) to food. It can be purely a commercial choice to provide extra nutrients in a food, or sometimes it is a public health policy which aims to reduce the number of people with dietary deficiencies in a population.

Diets that lack variety may create deficiencies in certain nutrients. Sometimes staple foods of a country or region can lack particular nutrients possibly due to the soil of a region or because of the lack of adequate diet. Addition of micronutrients to staple foods can prevent certain diseases, for example, fortification of flour with folic acid in order to reduce the number of pregnancies affected by neural tube defects.

Foods that are legally required to be fortified in the United Kingdom include:
- flour
- margarine.

Fortification of flour
Fortification of flour is required under the Bread and Flour Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1998. The regulations specify the amount of essential ingredients to be added to flour derived from wheat. There are exceptions in the case of wholemeal, self-raising and wheat malt flours.

The permitted ingredients are:
- calcium carbonate
- iron
- thiamin (Vitamin B1)
- nicotinic acid or nicotinamide.

These requirements date back over fifty years and are intended to restore the levels of these micronutrients to the amounts found naturally in wheat before the milling process, except in the case of calcium which is added for enrichment purposes.

Fortification of margarine
Fortification of margarine is mandatory under The Spreadable Fats (Marketing Standards) and the Milk and Milk Products (Protection of Designations) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 which requires that margarine must contain in every 100 grammes:
(a) not less than 800 microgrammes and not more than 1,000 microgrammes of vitamin A
(b) not less than 7.05 microgrammes and not more than 8.82 microgrammes of vitamin D,
and a proportionate amount in any part of 100 grammes.

In the UK there has been a legal requirement to fortify margarine with vitamins A and D since 1967, so that the levels are comparable with butter. In the United Kingdom vitamin A was first added voluntarily to margarine in 1927. The practice became mandatory along with vitamin D during the Second World War in order to achieve nutritional equivalence to butter.
Screen Description
This screen looks at the nutrient profiling model developed by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). It is used by Ofcom to regulate advertising and promotion of foods to children. Ofcom is the communication regulator for the UK. They regulate the TV and radio sectors, fixed line telecoms, mobiles, postal services, plus the airwaves over which wireless devices operate.

Teacher
Introduce the nutrient profiling model to students ensuring they have a basic knowledge of what it entails and the benefits involved with its use.

Additional Teacher’s Notes
The Food Standards Agency developed a nutrient profiling model as a tool to differentiate foods which are high in fat, saturated fat, salt or sugar. Since April 2007, media and communications regulator Ofcom has been using the model to regulate the advertising and promotion of foods to children. Using the nutrient profiling model Ofcom introduced broadcasting restrictions to reduce significantly the exposure of children to television advertising of foods high in fat, saturated fat, salt and sugar.

The FSA’s nutrient profiling model uses a scoring system which recognises the contribution made by beneficial nutrients that are particularly important in children’s diets and penalises food with components that children should eat less of. Points are allocated on a basis of nutritional content in 100g of food, accounting for both levels of energy, saturated fat, total sugars and salt as well as protein and positive food components like fibre, fruit, vegetables and nuts.

Foods are assessed on an individual basis. The score depends on the product’s recipe at the time of assessment. In 2009 all advertising of foods with higher fat, salt and sugar content was banned from children’s channels. On other channels, it had been already banned from children’s airtime and around programmes with a disproportionately high child audience. Advertising foods with higher fat, salt and sugar content continues to be allowed at other times.

For more information visit: http://www.food.gov.uk/multimedia/pdfs/techguidenutprofiling.pdf
New European Union Food Information Regulation

Screen Description
This screen explains that a new Food Information Regulation (FIR) was published in the Official Journal of the European Union on 22 November 2011. Many of the current food labelling requirements of the Food Labelling Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1996 will remain but there are some significant changes. The additional requirements will come in over a 3–to–5 year period.

Teacher
Discuss the future changes and developments with the students using the information on the information sheets provided.

Additional Teacher’s Notes
The new Food Information Regulation includes:
- mandatory origin labelling for fresh and frozen meat
- energy information on alcoholic drinks may be given voluntarily
- mandatory ‘back of pack’ labelling for pre packed foods. However, the way the information is presented will differ
- GDA nutrition information and FSA traffic lights can still be used voluntarily
- allergen information to be highlighted in the ingredients list
- drinks with a high caffeine content to have a warning ‘not recommended for children, or pregnant or breast feeding woman’
- the ability to use ‘Northern Ireland’ as place of provenance without reference to the UK, for example, ‘Made in Northern Ireland’
- where an origin claim is made and the primary ingredient is of a different origin, further origin information will need to be provided (the European Commission are currently working on implementing rules and guidance)
- voluntary Front of Pack (FoP) nutrition labelling for five nutrients (energy, fat, saturates, sugars and salt) can continue with a slight change that is, information on energy being provided per 100g and per portion and also must be expressed in both kilojoules and kilocalories.
**SLIDE 10 continued**

New European Union Food Information Regulation

**Transitional arrangements**
Timings apply from 22nd November 2011 when the Food Information Regulation (FIR) was published in the Official Journal of the EU.

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<th>Action</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Food Information Regulation came into force</td>
<td>13 December 2011</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foods voluntarily using new nutrition declaration can be sold</td>
<td>13 December 2011</td>
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<td>Mandatory declaration of presence of nanotechnology in food is required on the labelling</td>
<td>13 December 2014</td>
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<td>Application date for the majority of provisions</td>
<td>13 December 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Current legislation (including 200/13 and 90/496) repealed</td>
<td>13 December 2014</td>
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<td>Foods on the market or labelled prior to 3 years after the Regulation can be sold until food stocks are exhausted</td>
<td>Food stocks are exhausted</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foods bearing a nutrition declaration on a voluntary basis must comply with the requirements of the FIR</td>
<td>13 December 2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>Application date for the nutrition declaration becoming mandatory</td>
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<td>Foods on the market or labelled prior to 5 years after the regulation which do not have nutrition declaration can be sold until food stocks are exhausted</td>
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