Background Document - Nutrition Labelling Evaluation
Annotated References

1.
Kessler H, Wunderlich SM. Relationship Between Use of Food Labels and Nutrition Knowledge of People with Diabetes. *Diabetes Educator* 1999;25(4):549-559.
This descriptive study utilized 190 New Jersey diabetic residents with the purpose of identifying how people with diabetes use food labels to manage their intake of specific nutrients; which information they use, and the relationship between food label use and nutrition knowledge. The study found that people with diabetes use food labels more often than the general consumer and that there were deficiencies in nutrition knowledge in both label users and non users. The study also indicates there is a positive relationship between the level of nutrition knowledge of the participants when nutrition education is provided by a health care provider.

2.
Kristal, A.R.; Levy, L.; Patterson, R.; Li, S.S. and White, E.: *Trends in Food Label Use Associated with New Nutrition Labelling Regulations*. American Journal of Public Health, 1998; 88(8):1212-1215

This cross sectional study compared use of food labels before and after implementation of new Food and Drug Administration regulations in 1994. Findings: usual label use increased significantly by 8.5% in women and by 11.3% in men. More respondents looked for information on fat content and fewer failed to use labels because the “take too much time” or “are too hard to understand”. However, despite increased satisfaction in label content, 70% of adults still want labels to be easier to understand. Note survey instruments are available from the authors.

3.
Levy A.S. and Fein, S.S.: Consumer’s ability to perform tasks using nutrition labels.1998; JNE 30:210-217

Cross-sectional study looking at the relationship between ability to use labels in the selection of healthier food and demographics. Significantly poorer performance was seen with non-white, less educated consumers over 55 years of age. Consumers with diet-related health conditions also had poorer performance. Accuracy decreased with quantitative task requiring more complex math.

4.
Miller, C.; Jensen, G.L. and Achterberg, C.L.: Evaluation of a food label nutrition intervention for women with type 2 diabetes mellitus. 1999; JADA 99:323-328

A pretest-postest control group design to evaluate an educational intervention (90 min. sessions for 9 weeks) about the food label designed specifically for women with type 2 diabetes. The effectiveness of the food label education program on participant's knowledge was determined using a multiple-choice test designed to measure declarative and procedural knowledge. A skills-inventory assessed participants' perceived confidence in using the food label. The validity and reliability of the instruments had been established previously. Note: Social marketing stresses the importance of customizing information and behaviour-change strategies to a specific audience. Intervention focussed only on nutrients that were meaningful for women with diabetes. Solid article in terms of study design and analysis. Interesting re: 2 HESY target groups; rural subjects; change in knowledge)

5.
Miller, C.K., Probart, C.K. and Achterberg, C.L.:Food knowledge and misconceptions about the food label among women with non-insulin dependent diabetes mellitus.1997; Diabetes Educator 23(4):425-432

This study explored the attitude toward, use and knowledge of information on food labels among rural women with NIDDM age 40-60 years. Participants were able to refer to nutrition information on the label and stated a preference for the new format. Authors showed that comprehension of terms and percentages was poor. Misconceptions were noted around the percent daily value.

6.
National Institute of Nutrition. Nutrition Labelling In Canada. The Nutrition Information Panel: A Consumer Focus, National Institute of Nutrition, Ottawa, March 1998.

This 50-page document examines how the current Canadian nutrition information panel serves consumer information needs. This study seeks to: review our understanding of consumer awareness and use of nutrition labelling; compare Canadian and U.S. labelling systems in light of public health guidelines; and

make recommendations to provide direction for the review of Canadian nutrition labelling. The report cautions against simple adoption of the U.S. "Nutrition Facts" label, as severalof its features seem incompatible with Canadian health promotion objectives. Instead, it urges the development of a truly Canadian labelling system.

http://www.nin.ca/public_html/Consumer/foodlabelling.html

7.
National Institute of Nutrition. Nutrition Labelling: Perceptions and Preferences of Canadians. National Institute of Nutrition, Ottawa, June 1999.
Report: June 1999

NIN undertook this consumer research in early 1999 in support of Health Canada's nutrition labelling policy review process. The study garners detailed information on consumer attitudes and behaviours related to the nutrition information panel, encompassing content and format issues. Format options were tested to determine which conveys information best, and which ones consumers prefer.

This research with 1,331 interviews across Canada with a sub set of Heart disease and diabetes confirmed that nutrition plays a key role in the food Canadians choose to eat. 93% of Canadians want to see widespread nutrition labeling. Barriers to the effective use of the nutrition information on then food label are faced by older Canadians, and those who are socioeconomically disadvantaged by level of income and education. Through this research Canadian consumers have provided helpful suggestions for improvements to the current food label (pre 2002) as well as specific areas where education can be focused. The report is available on Health Canada's website at:

http://www.nin.ca/public_html/Consumer/foodlabelling.html

8.
National Institute of Nutrition. In Support of Healthy Food Labels. Rapport 1999;14(3):1

This issue of RAPPORT describes the review process undertaken by Health Canada of policies related to nutrition information on food labels, as well as the supportive findings of two collaborative consumer research studies by the National Institute of Nutrition.

http://www.nin.ca/public_html/Consumer/foodlabelling.html

9.
National Institute of Nutrition. Tracking Nutrition Trends 1989-1994-1997: An Update on Canadians' Attitudes, Knowledge and Reported Actions - Report: November 1997 (Study summary)

Tracking Nutrition Trends III (TNT III) gauges trends in the attitudes, awareness and reported behaviour of Canadians toward nutrition in general, and fat, fibre, calcium and cholesterol in particular. For the first time, it measures awareness of the "rainbow" design and the four food groups of Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating. The findings of TNT III provide impetus for the development of more effective strategies for moving Canadians toward healthy eating practices. The survey involved interviews with a representative sample of 1,956 Canadians 18 years of age or older in April 1997.
http://www.nin.ca/public_html/Consumer/nutrition_surveys.html

10.
National Institute of Nutrition. Tracking Nutrition Trends 2002: An Update on Canadians' Attitudes, Knowledge and Reported Actions – Report, not on line

11.
Neuhouser, M.L.; Kristal, A.R. and Patterson, R.E.: Use of food nutrition labels is associated with lower fat intake. 1999; JADA 99:45-53

This study explored the relationship between demographics and label use after the NLEA. Significantly higher use of nutrition label amongst women, consumers under age 35 and those with a higher than high school education. When demographics were controlled for the strongest predictors of label use were amongst people who believed in the importance of a low fat diet, believed in an association between diet and cancer and who were adopting a low fat diet.