Portion Sizes
For Purposes of Nutrition Labelling
CIAA Proposed Approach
New legislation on food labelling\(^1\) is currently being discussed by the European Parliament and the Council. One important aspect includes the provision of nutritional information on a per portion basis.

Current legislation\(^2\) requires that nutrition information is provided on pack per 100g or 100ml. CIAA supports the provision of nutrition information in this way as it helps consumers to compare the energy and nutritional content of different kinds of foodstuffs.

However, most foods are not consumed in 100g/ml quantities. Additional information is needed to help consumers understand the nutritional value of the amount of food/drink they actually consume. Therefore, CIAA supports the provision of nutrition information per portion in addition to the information provided per 100g/ml\(^3\).

In light of current ongoing discussions, this brochure outlines how portions, in the context of portion-based nutrition information, should be determined for foods and non-alcoholic drinks, based on three portion categories:

- **Category 1**: Single portion packs;
- **Category 2**: Multi portion packs (recognisable portion units); and
- **Category 3**: Multi portion packs (other).

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\(^1\) Proposal for the Provision of Food Information to Consumers


\(^3\) An FSAI nationwide survey found that most consumers surveyed would prefer to see nutrient values stated per portion rather than per 100g/ml. (www.fsai.ie/assets/0/96/204/9d12e4ec-566e-4f10-9c07-701577496a09.pdf)
CIAA Approach to Portions

Essential Guiding Principles

*for portion communication:*

Portions should always be:

- Meaningful, practical and easily understood by consumers;
- Representative for EU-wide population;
- Appropriate, reasonable and should not mislead the consumer; and
- Related to the food format, presentation, packaging and consumption habits.
Practical Communication Guidelines

Category 1:

Single Portion Pack:
Packs designed for single consumption occasion

Category 2:

Multi Portion Pack – Recognisable Units:
Clearly pre-portioned units

* Guideline Daily Amounts based on a 2000kcal (daily) diet

The nutritional needs of individuals may be higher or lower, based on gender, age, level of physical activity and other factors.
**Category 3:**

**Multi Portion Pack – Other:**
Portion unit is not obvious from pack or food format.
→ Requires **reference portion (g/ml)**, dependant on product/category

**Reference portions* are set taking multiple factors into consideration, including one or more of the following:**
→ EU consumption habits
→ Dietary recommendations or existing (inter)national reference portions/quantities
→ Existing legislation
→ History of use of the product
→ Manufacturing constraints

For a list of existing CIAA member portion rationales, please visit: [http://gda.ciaa.eu](http://gda.ciaa.eu)

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*Guideline Daily Amounts based on a 2000kcal (daily) diet*

The nutritional needs of individuals may be higher or lower, based on gender, age, level of physical activity and other factors.

* Reference portions: For many foods, where the portion size is not easily determined reference portions are used to allow comparison similar foods within a specific food category, e.g. breakfast cereals, margarines, soft drinks.
Practical Communication Guidelines

- Packs should always indicate how many portions are contained therein:
  - Divide portion size into the pack weight exactly, where possible.
  - Avoid communicating impractical fractions of a portion, which cannot be easily applied by consumers, e.g. 3¼ portions.

- Portions should always be indicated by weight or volume, in addition to explanatory text/descriptive language.

- Using descriptive language can aid consumer understanding. Examples:
  - By pack format, e.g. ‘Each pack’ (xg)/ ‘This pack’ (xg)/ ‘Each bar’ (xg)/ ‘Each pot’ (xg)/ ‘Per Can’ (xml).
  - By unit, e.g. ‘Slice of bread’ (xg)/ ‘Each cookie’ (xg).
  - By household measures, e.g. ‘1 tablespoon’ (xg)/ ‘Each glass’ (xml).
  - By proportion of pack, e.g. ‘1/4 of this pack’ (xg).

- Portions should be communicated consistently across brands and ranges.

- Be consistent:
  - Terminology: Always use the term ‘Portion’ (Avoid using the term ‘Serving’, the translation of which does not exist in all EU languages).
  - Descriptions:
    - Use the same descriptive language on front and back of pack, where relevant.
    - Match marketing description to portion description, e.g. 6 cookies – use ‘Each cookie’ as portion description, not ‘Each biscuit’ or ‘Each unit’.

- Visual scales and icons can aid consumer understanding.
  Examples: Providing a visual gauge on a pack of rice, an ice-cream icon.

* Where meaningful and appropriate

Based on IGD recommendations on portions: ‘Voluntary guidelines on communicating portion size to consumers’: [http://igd.biz/index.asp?id=1&fid=1&sid=4&lid=54&cid=1143](http://igd.biz/index.asp?id=1&fid=1&sid=4&lid=54&cid=1143)
Practical Communication Guidelines

Category 1
- If a pack is designed to be consumed in one single consumption occasion, the portion is the entire pack, even if the pack weight is greater than the reference portion.
  - Examples: Snack bar, pre-packed sandwich, meal-for-one.

Category 2
- The portion is equal to one individual pre-portioned unit only if this complies with all guiding principles (see page 3).
  - Examples: Sliced bread, sliced ham.
- If declaring one individual unit as a ‘portion’ does not comply with all guiding principles, then category 3 should be applied.

Category 3

Reference Portions:
- Where judgement is required (rice, pasta, sauces...), preferably use the term ‘typical’ (usage based on individual preferences) - e.g. ‘a typical portion is 75g rice’, ‘a typical portion is 10g margarine’...

Reference to pack proportion, where the product is designed to be consumed by a set number of people:
- If the product is specifically designed for consumption by a specific number of people and is clearly marketed as such (e.g. ‘For two’), the portion is determined by dividing the total pack weight by the number of people the product is designed to serve:
  - e.g. ‘For Two’: ‘Portion = \( \frac{1}{2} \) of this pack (xg)’.
  - e.g. ‘Party Pack (Serves 8)’: ‘Portion = \( \frac{1}{8} \) of this pack (xg)’.
- Using fractions (also applicable to category 2):
  - Fractions should only be used up to ‘one eighth’ of a pack or food item.
    e.g. ‘Party pack (for 8 people)’: Portion = \( \frac{1}{8} \) of this pack (xg).
  - If there are over eight portions, try to use other terminology. e.g. ‘Large party cake (Serves 16).’ ‘Portion = 1 slice (xg)’.
- Examples: Jam, family/share packs (e.g. crisps), some confectionery, family pizza, etc.