



Embargoed until 00:01 GMT 13.02.14

SEEING PAST THE LABELS

SWITCH TO HEALTHIER FOOD AND DRINK CHOICES WITH UK'S FIRST EVER 'FOODSWITCH' APP

- **App provides 'at a glance' colour coded nutrition information for over 80,000 products by scanning the barcode - remaining products to be 'crowd sourced' by users.**
- **Allows customers, for the first time, to switch to healthier products based on established nutrition criteria.**
- **Developed by leading health experts and supported by 13 organisations as a FREE and IMPARTIAL tool to improve the nation's diet.**

Launching today [13th February] FoodSwitch is the first ever smartphone app that enables UK consumers to make healthier and smarter food and drink choices. Putting consumers in control whilst out shopping, FoodSwitch will help customers make more informed decisions when purchasing their weekly shop, in turn reducing their risk of ill health through poor diets.

FoodSwitch allows users to scan the barcode of over 80,000 packaged food and drinks sold across major UK supermarkets using their smartphone camera to receive immediate, easy to understand 'traffic light' colour-coded nutritional information along with suggested similar, healthier products. It is now easier than ever for consumers to reduce high levels of fat, salt and sugar in their families' diet.

When the barcode of a food or drink product is scanned by a smartphone, FoodSwitch instantly searches the database and identifies healthier products by comparing the overall nutritional value of the product to existing Government criteria. The overall nutritional rating takes into account a range of different factors important to general health including fats, sugars, salt, protein and fibre [Ref 1].

Many manufacturers have been hiding behind their labels for years, and with the new voluntary front of pack nutrition labelling scheme being rolled out this year, FoodSwitch gives customers the perfect opportunity to get to grips with what the labels mean, and to better understand what is in their food! The app colour codes each product by the content of four important nutrients - total fat, saturated fat (saturates), sugars and salt:

- **Red** – (high) try to choose products with less red circles.
- **Amber** – (amber) this choice is OK, but going for choices labelled green is better.
- **Green** – (low) the more green circles, the healthier the choice.

FoodSwitch was developed by leading UK nutrition research experts; Consensus Action on Salt and Health (CASH), the Medical Research Council Human Nutrition Research, The British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group, and the Nuffield Department of Population Health and Nuffield Department of Primary Care, University of Oxford, and led by The George Institute for Global Health (TGI). FoodSwitch is further supported by nine UK organisations [Ref 2].

Bruce Neal, The George Institute for Global Health and inventor of FoodSwitch says:

“FoodSwitch is all about putting power back into the hands of the community. At the same time as recommending healthier alternatives to shoppers, the photographs of missing products sent in by users give us a complete picture of what’s in the food supply. This is information that used to be the preserve of industry - we can now use it to hold big businesses directly accountable for what they are putting on the shelves.”

Example of FoodSwitch App:



Katharine Jenner, Nutritionist and Campaign Director of CASH and FoodSwitch UK says: *“FoodSwitch puts the shopper back in control. It is not about telling people to stop eating or avoid certain foods with red colours but rather highlighting differences in products. This new app will allow people to take responsibility for their individual and their family’s health, and improve their eating habits in an easy and fun way.”*

Examples to illustrate FoodSwitch App [Ref 3]:

	Example of Popular Product	Healthier Choice
Breakfast	Nabisco Belvita Breakfast Muesli Biscuits	Weight Watchers Fruit & Seeds Breakfast Biscuits
Lunch	Glorious! Meal Soup West African Chicken & Peanut	Asda Chosen by You Chicken Curry Soup
Snack	Pringles Cheese & Onion	Walkers Mighty Light Cheese & Onion Crisps
Dinner	Sainsbury’s Sweet and Sour Chicken with Egg Fried Rice	Sainsbury’s Be Good To Yourself Sweet Chilli Chicken
Condiment	Hellmann’s Light Mayonnaise	Sainsbury’s Be Good To Yourself Mayonnaise

For products that are not listed in the database, shoppers are invited to ‘crowd source’ the information by using

the app to take photos of missing products, which will then be validated and added to the database for future use. There is also a feedback function available [Ref 4]. Data is also protected with FoodSwitch - when you access and share information on FoodSwitch, the app will not collect any identifiable data about you.

Dr Peter Scarborough, The British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group, Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford says:

“With all the messages about health in the public eye, it is hard for consumers to know what is ‘healthy’. The established nutrition criteria used in the app shows customers products that are healthier overall, not just whether they are higher in salt, fat or sugar.”

Professor Susan Jebb, Nuffield Department of Primary Care Health Sciences, Oxford University, says:

“A poor diet is responsible for tens of thousands of premature deaths every year in the UK. People will be able to use this smartphone technology to swap the foods in their regular shopping basket for healthier options to help themselves and their families to cut their risk of diabetes, heart disease and some cancers.”

Dr Toni Steer, Public Health Nutritionist, Medical Research Council Human Nutrition Research: *“FoodSwitch makes it quicker and easier to compare nutritional labels, which will hopefully support people in making healthier choices.”*

Search iTunes and Google Play for ‘**FoodSwitch**’ or follow the links:

iTunes - <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/app/foodswitch-uk/id804442303?mt=8>

Google Play – https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=uk.co.bupa.foodswitch&hl=en_GB

FoodSwitch is available as a free, UK-only download from iTunes and Google Play. FoodSwitch is compatible with Apple mobile devices that have a camera with auto-focus running iOS 5.0 or later, and Android phones running versions 2.3.x, or 4.0.x

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-ENDS-

Notes to Editor and References

For more information contact

- **National PR - David Clarke** on: 07773 225516, david@rock-pr.com

Video, images, frequently asked questions and more are available on request.

Available for interviews:

- **Katharine Jenner** Nutritionist, Campaign Director, CASH and FoodSwitch
- **Sonia Pombo** Nutritionist, CASH and FoodSwitch
- **Dr Peter Scarborough**, Senior Researcher, The British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group, Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford
- **Professor Bruce Neal**, Global Director of FoodSwitch, The George Institute for Global Health; (Based in Sydney, Australia - GMT + 11:00)

Ref 1 – About FoodSwitch

FoodSwitch provides nutritional information and suggested healthier alternatives based on an adapted version

of existing nutritional profiling criteria ('A' and 'B' below). It has been modified by The George Institute for Global Health for use in the FoodSwitch App.

A) Traffic light labelling

The ratings for red, amber and green for each nutrient are based on the Department of Health Guide to Creating a Front of Pack (FoP) Nutrition Label for Pre-packed Products Sold Through Retail Outlets:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/207588/FINAL_VERSION_OF_THE_2013_FOP_GUIDANCE_-_WEB.pdf

Traffic light labels are given per 100g/ml.

Energy (calories and kilojoules) are not coloured.

B) Healthier choices

Products have been placed into similar categories for comparison by the FoodSwitch UK team. The nutrient profile of each product is defined by The Department of Health's Nutrient Profiling Technical Guidance

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/216094/dh_123492.pdf

The information is current and based on our considered best available sources of evidence and information as of 6 January 2014. Whilst every care has been taken to ensure the accuracy of the data, no warranty of the truth or of this accuracy is provided. For the full Disclaimer and Terms of Use please contact

foodswitch@qmul.ac.uk

Ref 2 -The FoodSwitch UK team comprises leading independent nutrition researchers who include:

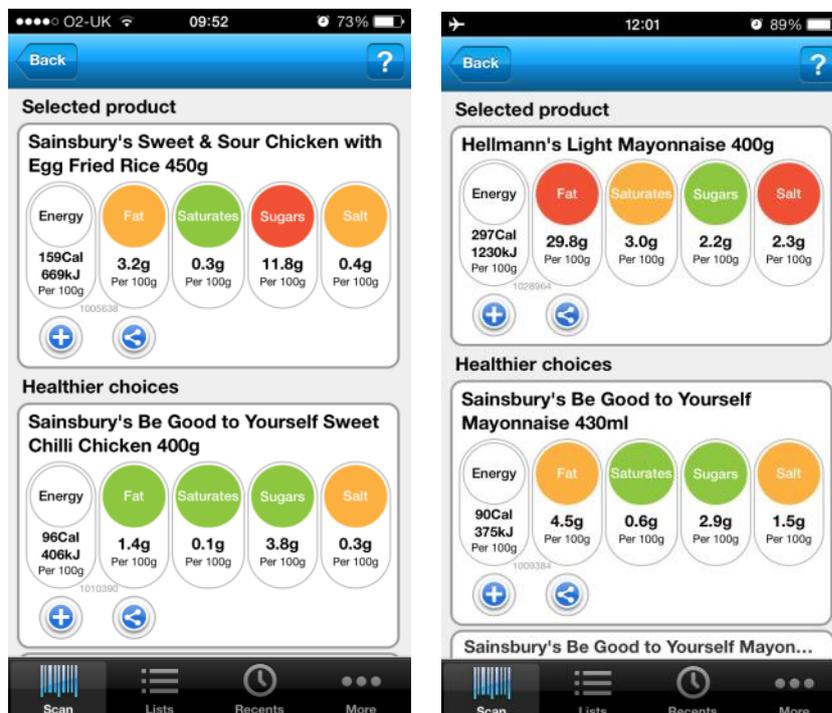
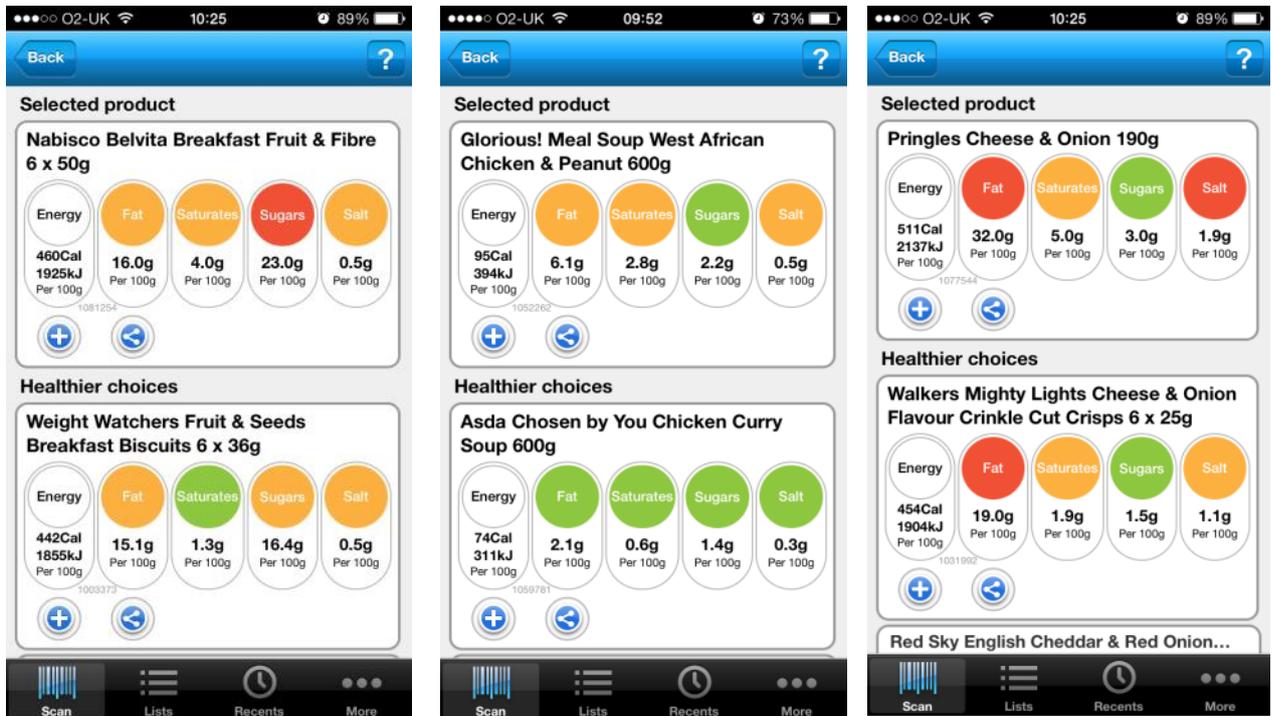
- **Consensus Action on Salt and Health (CASH)**; a charity concerned with salt and its effects on health, supported by 25 expert scientific members. CASH is based at Wolfson Institute of Preventive Medicine, Barts and The London School of Medicine & Dentistry, Queen Mary, University of London, EC1M 6BQ, Charity Registration Number: 1098818
- **The George Institute for Global Health**; whose mission is to help improve the health of millions of people around the world. With centres in Australia, China, India, the UK and partners and programs around the world, The George Institute is ranked among the top 10 research institutions globally for scientific impact
- **The British Heart Foundation Health Promotion Research Group, Nuffield Department of Population Health, University of Oxford**; who conducts internationally renowned research into population approaches to disease prevention
- **The Medical Research Council; Human Nutrition Research**; who aim to improve health through nutrition research

The FoodSwitch UK team are supported by a further nine charities and academic institutions in the UK:

- Blood Pressure UK
- Heart UK
- Kidney Research UK
- National Obesity Forum
- National Osteoporosis Society
- Queen Mary University of London
- Stroke Association
- Sustain (Children's Food Campaign)
- The British Dietetic Association

Ref 3 – Product data were collected using the FoodSwitch App in February 2014 and products in this release purchased w/c 10th February 2014.

Screen shots of FoodSwitch, looking at examples of food products, and healthier choices displayed on the app:



Ref 4 – Nutritional information has been collected for approx. 81,000 products, which we estimate represents half of all UK grocery. We strongly encourage users to crowd source their favourite products using the App, and also to let us know if product data is different to that displayed, or the swaps are not helpful, via the feedback function. These changes will then appear in future updates to the App.

The App currently works best on: *Branded products, Asda, Sainsbury's*

The App currently works, but less well, on; *The Co-operative, Waitrose own label, Tesco own label, Marks & Spencer's own label, Morrisons own label*

The App currently has limited use in; *Aldi, Lidl, Iceland*