



## Summary

The portion rationale of 30g for snacks and nuts recommended by the European Snacks Association is in line with dietary recommendations for a snack in between meals and reflects consumption patterns. It also reflects the intake linked to health benefits of nuts.

ESA members are encouraged to voluntarily display the portion rationale of 30g front-of-pack and back-of-pack. As a result, the vast majority of European savoury snacks manufacturers now systematically indicate the 30g portion on their packs.

Where more than one portion is included in a pack, it is also recommended that consumers be informed of this, and the number of portions a pack contains be declared.

## ESA labelling commitment and portion size recommendation

The savoury snacks industry is committed to providing consumers with clear and simple nutrition information that they need in order to be able to make an informed choice. We therefore support the use of Reference Intakes (RIs)<sup>1</sup> on-pack as formalised by European Law.

While nutrition information provided per 100g (100ml) helps the consumer compare the nutrient content of different kinds of foodstuffs in general, it fails to provide information on the actual nutrient content the consumer intends to consume.

Providing nutrition information on a per portion basis empowers consumers to choose a healthy, balanced diet. In this way, consumers can decide if consumption of the whole pack, or of the portion suggested on the pack of that particular food, is appropriate for them.

Back in 2010, in close cooperation with FoodDrinkEurope, the European Snacks Association, which covers more than 80% of the branded market, has agreed a portion recommendation of 30g for savoury snacks and snack nuts which aims to ensure that:

*=> Portions are compatible with existing dietary recommendations*

*=> Portions reflect consumer behaviour*

Since then, ESA members have been encouraged to voluntarily provide this information front-of-pack and/or back-of-pack. As a result, the vast majority of European savoury snacks manufacturers now systematically indicate the recommended position rationale on their packs.

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<sup>1</sup> Also known as Guideline Daily Amounts (GDA)

## Dietary Recommendations – Energy Intake

Eating small portions of foods between meals can be part of an overall balanced diet. On the basis of a 2000 kcal diet<sup>2</sup>, eating between meals should not exceed 300-400 kcal, about 15%. Within that, treats are considered acceptable provided they do not make up more than 8% of the overall RIs, approximately 160 kcal.<sup>3</sup> Thus:

*=> 30g of snacks would provide 120-170 kcal, depending on the nature of the ingredients/preparation of the product (i.e. baked, fried, or roasted).*

*=> 30g of nuts would provide 170-200 kcal, depending on the nutritional differences between nuts and their preparation.*

## Dietary Recommendations – Health Benefits

ESA considered health benefits of both snacks and nuts as important criteria.

[Health benefits of nuts](#), such as maintenance of normal cholesterol and a healthy heart, are generally linked to a regular consumption of 28-30g of nuts. This amount is a precise entity that consumers can envisage: “a small hand full”.<sup>4</sup>

## Consumer Behaviour

The savoury snacks industry has a long history of providing nutrition information on a per portion basis as well as per 100g. We aim to take different eating patterns in 27 Member States into account.

Indeed, there are considerable differences in the way savoury snacks are consumed across Europe. They are enjoyed on different occasions ranging from social occasions such as parties through snacking between meals to eating on the go. In France and Spain for example, savoury snacks are mainly consumed at social occasions such as the aperitif, or barbecues while in the UK people eat them as a snack throughout the day. In Scandinavia or Germany countries they are mostly shared within the family, when watching television, at the cinema or during social occasions such as parties or picnics.

However, despite these differences, the 30g portion rationale proposed by ESA typically reflects consumer behaviour across the EU as shown by the EU-funded Food4Me project.<sup>5</sup> The survey ran in 7 EU countries indeed demonstrates that the median intake (in g) of savoury snacks (e.g. crisps, pretzels, biscuits, etc.) per eating occasion matches the 30g portion.

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<sup>2</sup> According to the [Food and Agriculture Organization](#) of the [United Nations](#), the average minimum energy requirement per person per day is about 1,800 kcal. The average values as set by the European Food Safety Agency are the following: Women (between 30 and 60 years old) 2,000 kcal; Men (same age range) 2,600 kcal

<sup>3</sup> UK FSA “Eatwell plate” as an overview on a healthy balanced diet: <http://www.eatwell.gov.uk/healthydiet/eatwellplate/>

<sup>4</sup> Food and Drug Administration, Summary of Qualified Health Claims Permitted: <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/qhc-sum.html>

<sup>5</sup> “Comparison of the portion size and frequency of consumption of 156 foods across seven European countries: insights from the Food4ME study”; L. Kirwan et al. (2016): <https://www.nature.com/articles/ejcn2015227?platform=oscar&draft=collection>

### **Industry Practice**

- Where more than one portion is included in a pack then we encourage our members to inform consumers of this and declare the number of portions a pack contains.
- Packaging sizes for savoury snacks in Europe currently range from 10g to 300g. Bags exceeding 50 g are considered for sharing or consumption on several eating occasions.
- Currently used portions or portion recommendations range from 10-50g, with a majority of sizes falling already in the 20- 30g range.
- ESA has issued the following recommendation to members as regards single serve packs which may have portions that deviate from the reference portion.
- Single-portion packages should be defined as those products weighing 50g or less that are designed to be eaten in a single occasion.
- For all individually wrapped and sold items up to 50g the nutrition information provided should be based on the actual product weight.
- Any single-portion package of more than 50g (and all multi-serve packs) should be labelled based on the reference serving size of 30g for snacks and nuts.

#### To illustrate this:

=> A 40g pack of potato crisps would be considered a single serve pack and nutrition information provided on-pack per 40g and per 100g

=> A 120g pack of potato crisps would be considered for sharing or eating on more than one occasion. Nutrition information should be provided per 30g and per 100g with the sharing intent showing that the pack contains 4 x 30g portions;

=> Where the pack weight is not an exact multiple of 30g the number of portions should be expressed as being between x and y portions, e.g. for a 200g pack the number of portions would be shown as 6 - 7 portions.