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### Survey of health claims for Australian foods made on Internet sites

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## Survey of health claims for Australian foods made on Internet sites

### Abstract

**Aim:** Australia and New Zealand are currently preparing a new food standard code, which will allow the use of health claims on food products and in associated advertising. The aim of this study was to obtain preliminary information about the current use of health claims on the Internet and the level of compliance of these claims with existing regulations. **Methods:** From August to October 2005 a survey was conducted of 1068 websites associated with the top 20 food processing companies in Australia, and an additional 683 websites for food products found to carry health claims in previous studies of product labels and magazine advertisements. The results were compared with those from a 2003 survey of health claims on the labels of 7850 products. **Results:** The survey found that 14.5% of food product websites carried a health claim, and 40.7% and 37.0% of products previously identified as carrying claims on product labels or in magazines respectively, had Internet claims. 21.4% of claims were located directly on the food product web page, but the majority (78.6%) were on associated links within the manufacturer's website. Many of the claims (19.7%) were high level or therapeutic claims not permitted by current food standards. **Conclusions:** Health claims are not being made more frequently on websites compared to product labels, but there is a greater prevalence of high level and therapeutic claims made on the Internet. In future food standards enforcement will need to give greater priority to monitoring the use of health claims on the Internet.

### Keywords

Internet, health claims, food standards, advertising

### Disciplines

Arts and Humanities | Life Sciences | Medicine and Health Sciences | Social and Behavioral Sciences

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**Title:**                   **Survey of health claims for Australian foods made on  
Internet sites**

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H Dragicevich is an MSc(Nutr&Diet) candidate who undertook the main data collection and analysis and drafted the manuscript. P Williams initiated the study, supervised the project and assisted with interpretation and writing the manuscript. L Ridges is a PhD candidate who assisted with project supervision, data analysis, interpretation and manuscript preparation.

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**Version**                3

## 1 **Abstract**

2 **Aim:** Australia and New Zealand are currently preparing a new food standard code, which  
3 will allow the use of health claims on food products and in associated advertising. The aim of  
4 this study was to obtain preliminary information about the current use of health claims on the  
5 Internet and the level of compliance of these claims with existing regulations.

6 **Methods:** From August to October 2005 a survey was conducted of 1068 websites associated  
7 with the top 20 food processing companies in Australia, and an additional 683 websites for  
8 food products found to carry health claims in previous studies of product labels and magazine  
9 advertisements. The results were compared with those from a 2003 survey of health claims on  
10 the labels of 7850 products.

11 **Results:** The survey found that 14.5% of food product websites carried a health claim, and  
12 40.7% and 37.0% of products previously identified as carrying claims on product labels or in  
13 magazines respectively, had Internet claims. 21.4% of claims were located directly on the  
14 food product web page, but the majority (78.6%) were on associated links within the  
15 manufacturer's website. Many of the claims (19.7%) were high level or therapeutic claims not  
16 permitted by current food standards.

17 **Conclusions:** Health claims are not being made more frequently on websites compared to  
18 product labels, but there is a greater prevalence of high level and therapeutic claims made on  
19 the Internet. In future food standards enforcement will need to give greater priority to  
20 monitoring the use of health claims on the Internet.

21

22 **Key words:** Internet, health claims, food standards, advertising

## 1 Introduction

2

3 The use of health claims for foods has been a contentious issue <sup>1-3</sup>. Although nutrient content  
4 and function claims are commonly found on food products throughout the world, the  
5 regulation of such claims varies widely <sup>4</sup>. Currently in Australia and New Zealand nutrient  
6 content claims and some health maintenance claims are allowed, but other types of health  
7 claims, with the exception of those concerning the benefit of maternal consumption of folate  
8 in regard to preventing neural tube defects, are prohibited <sup>5</sup>. However, Food Standards  
9 Australia New Zealand (FSANZ) is now developing a new food standard which will allow the  
10 regulated use of health claims <sup>6</sup>.

11

12 When introduced, the new standard will apply to product labels and all areas of associated  
13 advertising, one of which is the Internet. Small amounts of research have been conducted into  
14 the use of health claims in magazines <sup>7, 8</sup> and on product labels <sup>9-12</sup>, but to date no research has  
15 been done into the use of claims on the Internet in Australia. Despite this lack of research, it  
16 has been the experience in countries other than Australia that a large number of dubious and  
17 unfounded health claims are being made on the Internet <sup>13-16</sup>, and concern regarding the need  
18 for tighter regulation has been expressed <sup>13</sup>.

19

20 This study aimed to obtain preliminary data about the presence of health claims on the  
21 internet sites of the top 20 food processing companies in Australia advertising food products.  
22 Additionally, the study examined the presence of health claims on internet sites advertising  
23 foods shown to carry health claims either on their labels, or in magazine advertisements as  
24 determined by previous surveys. It also investigated the location of claims within the  
25 websites.

## 1 **Methods**

2

3 To determine the level and type of health claims made on the Internet, the search engine

4 Google was used to conduct a targeted search for food products which were either:

5 a) Advertised on the websites of the top 20 food processing companies in Australia, as

6 identified in the US Foreign Agricultural Service Report – ‘Australia Food Processing

7 Ingredients Sector, Food Processing Sector, 2000’<sup>17</sup>.

8 b) Identified as carrying high, general or therapeutic claims in a survey undertaken in

9 2003 which surveyed 7,850 food products for sale in supermarkets and a sample of

10 health food and Asian food stores in New South Wales<sup>11</sup>, or

11 c) Promoted in print media advertisements for food containing a health or therapeutic

12 claim, found in a survey of Australia’s top-selling 30 magazines conducted in the first

13 six months of 2005 (unpublished data).

14

15 For the purpose of data collection, all claims made on the food product web page were

16 recorded. Also recorded was any information from the same website located on a different

17 web page, and any information found on separate websites provided as links on the original

18 food product web page.

19

20 Where information regarding the food product was located on the manufacturer’s website, but

21 on web pages separate to that of the food product, only information located within a

22 maximum of two mouse clicks (ie, two links away from the original web page) was recorded.

23 Where information was located on a link separate to the manufacturer’s website, only

24 information located within one click was recorded.

25

1 The following information from each food product and food manufacturer's website visited  
2 was recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet:

- 3 • Food product category, using the same 47 food categories used in the 2003 Australian  
4 food product survey <sup>11</sup>, with the addition of a miscellaneous category (including nuts  
5 and confectionery)
- 6 • Product and brand name
- 7 • Manufacturer name
- 8 • Internet address and date accessed
- 9 • Website location of claim
- 10 • Links to other websites (eg. a disease-related organisation website)
- 11 • Exact wording of health claim/s and any implied claims (eg. symbols)

12

13 Where health or therapeutic claims were found, each claim was organised into one of the 16  
14 claim categories as defined in the FSANZ Initial Assessment Report to Proposal P293 <sup>6</sup>.  
15 Definitions and examples of each claim category have been given elsewhere <sup>11</sup>. The claims  
16 were analysed for the following:

- 17 • Percentage of products with health claims in each food category
- 18 • Number and type of claim/s made
- 19 • Compliance with current food regulations (determined by assessment with current  
20 regulations as outlined by Food Standards Australia New Zealand in Proposal 293 <sup>6</sup>  
21 and Standard 1.1A.2 (Transitional Standard – Health Claims) of the Food Standards  
22 Code <sup>5</sup>.

23

- 1 For the purpose of this survey, only general, high and therapeutic health claims were reported.
- 2 Nutrient content or general descriptions (eg, 'healthy' or 'nutritious') made in association
- 3 with food products were not included in the data collection.



## 1 **Results**

### 3 **Frequency of claims**

4 The search of the websites associated with the top 20 food processing companies in Australia  
5 located a total of 1,068 food products. A website health or therapeutic claim was identified in  
6 association with 155 (14.5%) of these products (Table 1). The average number of Internet  
7 claims per product was 0.3, with spreads having the highest average number of claims per  
8 product (3.2). Energy drinks was the sole food category in which an Internet claim was  
9 associated with 100% of its products.

10  
11 Table 2 highlights the types of health claims found according to the P293 claim classification  
12 framework <sup>6</sup>. The majority of claims found were general level claims (77.2%), followed by  
13 high level claims (19.4%), endorsement claims (3.1%) then therapeutic claims (0.3%). The  
14 largest portion of general level claims were nutrient function (57.8% of all claims), and of the  
15 high level claims, risk reduction claims in relation to a serious disease or condition were the  
16 most frequent (10.4%).

17  
18 Of the endorsement claims found, the NSW School Canteen Project endorsed six of the nine  
19 products and the remaining three products were endorsed by sporting personalities: one iron  
20 man, one iron woman and one footballer. Two implied claims were recorded: one product was  
21 stamped with the 'Happy Tooth Logo' the logo of Tooth Friendly International and the other  
22 carried the Osteoarthritis Australia (O.A.) Bone stamp of approval.

23

### 24 **Internet vs. food labels and magazine advertisements – number of claims**

25 The 2003 Australian food label survey identified 1,099 products as carrying health claims <sup>11</sup>.  
26 518 of those 1099 products were additional products to those found in the search of the top 20

1 food processing companies in Australia. Of these 518 products, 372 had accessible websites.  
2 Health or therapeutic claims were found in association with 211 (56.7%) of the 372 products  
3 (Table 3).

4  
5 **Of products with a website, the average number of claims per product was 3.5.** At least one  
6 website health or therapeutic claim was found for all products in the juice (cold), rice, soups  
7 and sports drinks categories, and juice (cold) was the food category identified as having the  
8 highest average number of claims per product (9.7).

9  
10 The 2005 magazine survey identified 396 food product advertisements as carrying health  
11 claims. 165 of the 396 products were additional products to those found in the search of the  
12 top 20 food processing companies in Australia. Of these 165 products, 72 had accessible  
13 websites. Health or therapeutic claims were found in association with 61 (84.7%) of the 72  
14 products (Table 4).

15  
16 The average number of claims per product with a website was **12.2** with teas having the  
17 highest average number of website claims per product (21.0). A health or therapeutic claim  
18 was found in association with all of the products in the breakfast cereals, cake mixes, canned  
19 seafood, drink bases, milk and teas categories.

20

### 21 **Internet vs. food labels and magazine advertisements – type of claims**

22 Of the website claims associated with foods found to carry claims on labels in the 2003 food  
23 product survey, 74.9% were general level, 23.0% were high level, 1.8% were therapeutic and  
24 0.2% were endorsement. The general level claim type most commonly found was nutrient

1 function (60.5%) and the high level claim type most commonly found was risk reduction  
2 claims in relation to a serious disease or condition (20.6%).

3  
4 Similarly, the website claims associated with the products identified in the 2005 magazine  
5 survey also revealed general level claims to be the most common claim type, comprising  
6 39.9% of the total claims, followed by therapeutic (30.5%), and high level claims (29.7%).  
7 Nutrient function claims (15.5%) were the most common general level claims and risk  
8 reduction claims in relation to a serious disease or condition were the most common high  
9 level claims (15.2%).

10

11

## 12 **High level and therapeutic claims**

13 Combining the results from the three search strategies, the high level and therapeutic claims  
14 referred to 22 different nutrients or biomarkers. The food component that appeared in the  
15 highest number of high level and therapeutic claims combined was the whole food rather than  
16 specific nutrients or components (33.8%) and the health benefits most commonly appearing  
17 were in relation to cardiovascular disease (31.0%) and cancer (22.1%). Only three high level  
18 claims related to the permitted claim for folate and neural tube defects and one of these did  
19 not comply with regulation. Table 5 summarises the proportion of claims found with the three  
20 search strategies referencing the various health benefits and nutrient or properties claimed.

21

22 Teas were the food category where the greatest number 228 (37.0%) of high level health  
23 claims were found. It was also the food category where the highest number 268 (91.5%) of  
24 therapeutic claims were found followed by the yoghurt category (6.5%). After teas, the

1 highest number of website high level health claims was found in the juice (20.6%), juice  
2 (cold) (13.1%), milk (5%), canned seafood (4.7%) and yoghurt (3.4%) categories.

3

#### 4 **Location of claims**

5 The total number of claims found via the three search strategies was 2,484. Of these claims  
6 21.2% (527) were found on the web page the food product was advertised on and 78.6%  
7 (1,953) of claims were found on a separate page to the webpage advertising the product,  
8 within the manufacturer's website. For example, the menu at the side of the web page would  
9 offer links such as: 'Nutrition and bone facts' or 'facts about peanuts'.

## 1 **Discussion**

2  
3 This study focused on the prevalence of claims found on the top 20 Australian food  
4 manufacturers' websites and the type and frequency of website claims associated with  
5 products found previously to carry claims on the label or in magazine advertisements.  
6 Consequently, the search strategy utilised was not a comprehensive Internet search of all food  
7 products, types or categories. In particular, no products were found from the frozen dessert,  
8 frozen vegetables and olives categories. Furthermore, unpackaged foods such as fresh fruits  
9 and vegetables were not included in this Internet survey. Thus the data collected in this study  
10 cannot provide a comprehensive estimate of the prevalence of health claims for foods on the  
11 Internet, and should therefore be considered as preliminary data which offers a reference point  
12 for further investigation and some insight into strategies regulatory enforcement agencies  
13 could use as a means of monitoring the use of false or misleading internet health claims.

### 14 15 **Frequency of claims**

16 The survey of websites associated with the top 20 food processing companies in Australia  
17 found that 14.5% of a total of 1068 products carried a website health claim. This result is  
18 comparable to the findings of previous research regarding claims on product labels. In 2000-  
19 2001 a survey of 1,281 food products, performed by the US Food and Drug Administration  
20 (FDA), found that 10.6% had health or nutrient structure/function claims<sup>4</sup>. In the 2003  
21 Australian food product survey 14% of products carried a nutrient function, health or related  
22 claim <sup>11</sup>. This suggests that the proportion of products with website health claims, as  
23 determined by this search method, is similar to the proportion of products carrying health  
24 claims on food packages.

25

1 The survey of websites associated with the top 20 food processing companies in Australia  
2 also provided an insight into the food categories that commonly carry Internet health claims.  
3 The ten food categories with the highest percentage of website claims were: energy drinks, fat  
4 spreads, edible oils, pasta, yoghurt, cheese, teas, breakfast cereals, muesli bars and canned  
5 vegetables. In the 2001 Australian food survey of nutrient content and nutrition claims on  
6 labels <sup>12</sup> five of the top ten food categories were the same as those identified in this study. In  
7 the 2003 survey of health claims on food product labels <sup>11</sup>, four of the top ten categories were  
8 the same. The five food categories common to the top ten in all three studies were: energy  
9 drinks, sports drinks, yoghurt, breakfast cereals and muesli bars.

10

### 11 **Internet vs. food labels and magazines**

12 Due to the concern that has previously been expressed in the US and Britain after the  
13 discovery of growing numbers of dubious health claims on the Internet <sup>14</sup> it was expected that  
14 the current survey might find a larger number of health claims on websites in comparison to  
15 product labels and magazines. Contradicting this assumption, however, were the findings that  
16 only 40.7% and 37.0% of websites related to food products previously identified as carrying  
17 claims in the 2003 Australian food product survey and 2005 magazine survey<sup>3</sup> respectively,  
18 also had related Internet health claims.

19

20 Although this result indicates that manufacturers are not more likely to make claims on the  
21 Internet compared to product labels and magazines, the types of claims and the average  
22 number of claims per website did vary and does warrant concern. Compared to the 2003  
23 Australian food product survey, which found 1.1% of claims to be high level and 0.1%  
24 therapeutic<sup>11</sup>, the current study found that from the survey of the websites of the top 20 food  
25 processing companies in Australia, 19.4% had high level claims and 0.3% therapeutic claims.

1  
2 In comparison with the 2003 Australian food label survey which found that the average  
3 number of claims per product was 0.4, the current survey found a similar figure (0.3).  
4 However, the average number of Internet health claims per product identified in the 2003  
5 Australian food product survey search and the 2005 magazine survey searches (ie products  
6 known to have claims and with associated websites) were much higher: 6.2 and 14.4 website  
7 claims per product respectively.

8

### 9 **General level claims**

10 77.2% of all Internet claims found on the top 20 food manufacturers' websites were general  
11 level claims. This was expected, given current regulation which prohibits the use of most high  
12 level claims. Of the general level claims, most were nutrient function claims (57.8%). A  
13 nutrient function claim describes the role of a food, a nutrient [or biologically active  
14 substance] in terms of normal growth and development. As this claim type does not reference  
15 benefits above normally accepted nutrient functions, it is likely that claims of this nature can  
16 be scientifically substantiated most easily, and therefore are more appealing to manufacturers.

17

18 However, the remaining general level claims would require independent substantiation under  
19 the proposed regulations for health claims and monitoring of these claims will be necessary to  
20 ensure that scientific substantiation is adequate, so as not to mislead consumers.

21

### 22 **High level and therapeutic claims**

23 19.4% of Internet claims found on the food manufacturers' websites were assessed as non-  
24 compliant (because they were non-approved high level or therapeutic claims). This study did  
25 not attempt to examine whether such claims were adequately substantiated. In the 2003

1 survey of food product labels, 5.8% of health claims identified were non-compliant with  
2 current regulations. The reason for the greater frequency of high level claims on the websites  
3 is unknown. It may be that manufacturers are unaware that food regulations also apply to  
4 claims in this setting. Such a level of non-compliance in the Internet claims is cause for  
5 concern as it may pose a threat to the credibility of all claims, and it confirms that some health  
6 claims are currently being misused on the Internet.

7

8 A large number of the high level and therapeutic claims were located on teas. One possible  
9 reason is that some teas have successfully applied to be Listable Goods with the Therapeutic  
10 Goods Authority (TGA), meaning that some claims not currently permitted on foods might be  
11 permitted on these products, even though they are sold together in the same section of the  
12 supermarket. However, information on the presence of AUST-L numbers was not collected in  
13 this study.

14

15 Care is needed in interpreting the data on health benefits claimed (Table 5) since the  
16 combination of information from the three sample sources means this data is not necessarily  
17 representative of all Internet claims, but there seem to be some clear conclusions about the  
18 most commonly claimed benefits. Cardiovascular disease and cancer were referenced most  
19 frequently in all claims. Although data into the frequency of the purchase of food products  
20 carrying or not carrying health claims is limited, a US survey conducted in 2000 suggested  
21 that over 50% of respondents were more likely to eat foods reported to reduce the risk of heart  
22 disease and cancer<sup>7</sup>.

23



## 1 **Location of claims**

2 A key finding of this study is in relation to the location of claims on manufacturers' websites.

3 A high proportion (78.6%) of Internet claims were found on web pages of the manufacturer's

4 website, but not on the web page specifically advertising the food product. It is not entirely

5 clear if such claims would be regarded as advertising or simply as dietary or nutrition

6 information provided by the manufacturer. However these results on the presence of claims

7 within manufacturers' websites provide valuable information to regulatory agencies indicating

8 that entire websites need to be monitored and not solely the specific product pages.

## 1 **Conclusions**

2  
3 The three search strategies applied in this study provided an overview of the use of health  
4 claims for foods on the Internet. The results indicate that health claims are not being made  
5 more frequently on the Internet compared to product labels and magazines, but the average  
6 number of claims per website compared to product labels is higher, and high level and  
7 therapeutic claims are used more frequently on websites. Further, the results showed that there  
8 are currently a high proportion of non-compliant claims appearing on Internet sites.

9  
10 In regard to location, this study shows that health claims are not solely being made on web  
11 pages advertising food products, but rather that the majority of claims are being made on  
12 separate web pages within manufacturer websites.

13  
14 Although this study surveyed only a limited sample of products, and was unable to include all  
15 food products available for sale in Australian supermarkets, it does provide useful baseline  
16 data for regulators. The results describe food categories which might commonly contain  
17 health claims and website locations where claims are commonly being made. Moreover, the  
18 high number of non-compliant claims found indicates that current regulation is not being  
19 enforced, suggesting that more effective processes of monitoring are required if the number of  
20 illegal claims made on the Internet is to be minimised.

21  
22 In conclusion, the Internet is undoubtedly an area of advertising that requires close  
23 monitoring, especially with the upcoming release of the new health claims standard.

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**Table 1. Number of health claims found on websites associated with products manufactured by the top twenty Australian food processing companies <sup>†</sup>**

Food category	Number of products located on top 20 manufacturers' websites	Total number of products with website claims	% of products with website claims	Total number of website claims	Mean number of website claims per product
Energy drinks	2	2	100.0	2	1.0
Fat spreads	20	11	55.0	19	1.7
Edible oils	18	9	50.0	18	2.0
Pasta	2	1	50.0	2	2.0
Yoghurt	52	25	48.1	71	2.8
Cheese	51	19	37.3	28	1.5
Teas	22	8	36.4	10	1.3
Breakfast cereals	47	12	25.5	29	2.4
Muesli bars	24	6	25.0	6	1.0
Canned vegetables	10	2	20.0	3	1.5
Bread	32	6	18.8	8	1.3
Cream	16	3	18.8	6	2.0
Milk	91	17	18.7	26	1.5
Frozen Meals	77	11	14.3	11	1.0
Spreads	44	5	11.4	16	3.2
Biscuits and crackers	188	15	8.0	31	2.1
Drink bases	13	1	7.7	1	1.0
Meat (fresh & canned)	31	1	3.2	1	1.0
Miscellaneous <sup>‡</sup>	44	1	2.3	1	1.0
Cake mixes	17	0	0	0	0
Canned fruit	6	0	0	0	0
Chips	1	0	0	0	0
Coconut cream/milk	1	0	0	0	0
Cooking sauces	70	0	0	0	0
Custard	34	0	0	0	0
Flour	3	0	0	0	0
Frozen pastry	6	0	0	0	0
Fruit bars	2	0	0	0	0
Ice creams	67	0	0	0	0
Juice	3	0	0	0	0
Juice (cold)	4	0	0	0	0
Noodles	4	0	0	0	0
Salad dressing	6	0	0	0	0
Salsa/pesto	20	0	0	0	0
Soft drink	18	0	0	0	0
Soups	2	0	0	0	0
Sports drinks	7	0	0	0	0
Sugar	13	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1068</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>289</b>	<b>0.3</b>

<sup>†</sup> Goodman Fielder, Nestle Foods, Gardner Smith, Coca Cola Amatil, George Weston, Dairy Farmers, Australian Meat Holdings, CSR, National Foods, Murray Goulburn, Bonlac Foods, Effem Foods, Cadbury Schweppes, Inghams Enterprises, Unifoods, Arnotts, Ridley Corporation, Nippon Meat, Pauls, Kraft Foods.

**Table 2. Types of health claims found on websites associated with products manufactured by the top twenty Australian food processing companies**

<b>Claim type and classification</b>		<b>Number of claims</b>	<b>% of total claims</b>
<b>General level claims</b>	Nutrient function claim	167	57.8
	Enhanced nutrient function claim	33	11.4
	Risk reduction claim in relation to a non-serious disease or condition	1	0.3
	Whole-of-diet claims-non serious	0	0.0
	Performance claim – non serious	20	6.9
	Life stage claim	0	0.0
	Implied	2	0.7
	<b>Total general level claims</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>77.2</b>
<b>High level claims</b>	Biomarker maintenance claim	7	2.4
	Biomarker enhancement claim	18	6.2
	Risk reduction claim in relation to a serious disease or condition	30	10.4
	Whole-of-diet claim-serious	0	0.0
	Performance claim – serious	1	0.3
	Slimming	0	0.0
<b>Total high level claims</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>19.4</b>	
	<b>Therapeutic claim</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0.3</b>
	<b>Endorsement</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3.1</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>289</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 3. Number of health claims found on websites related to 518<sup>†</sup> products carrying claims in the 2003 food product label survey<sup>11</sup>**

<b>Food category<sup>‡</sup></b>	<b>Number of products located on manufacturers' websites</b>	<b>Total number of products with website claims</b>	<b>% of products with website claims</b>	<b>Total number of website claims</b>	<b>Mean number of website claims per product</b>
Juice (cold)	27	27	100	261	9.7
Rice	1	1	100	3	3.0
Soups	2	2	100	10	5.0
Sports drinks	4	4	100	7	1.8
Canned seafood	13	12	92.3	57	4.4
Drink bases	7	6	85.7	22	3.1
Juice	54	45	83.3	433	8.0
Sports bars	23	18	78.3	62	2.7
Milk	30	23	76.7	151	5.0
Spreads	12	7	58.3	17	1.4
Teas	37	20	54.1	48	1.3
Yoghurt	43	19	44.2	114	2.7
Breakfast cereals	39	15	38.5	75	1.9
Pasta	7	2	28.6	10	1.4
Frozen fish	16	4	25.0	16	1.0
Ice creams	34	5	14.7	25	0.7
Bread	23	1	4.3	4	0.2
<b>Total (including categories with no claims)</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>211</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>1315</b>	<b>3.5</b>

<sup>†</sup> These products are those found to carry a health claim on their label in the 2003 study and which were not reported in Table 1.

<sup>‡</sup> The 47 food categories used in the 2003 survey were used in the current survey. However, the Internet searches did not reveal advertised website claims from all categories. Those food categories without claims have been omitted from the above table.

**Table 4. Number of health claims found on websites related to 165<sup>1</sup> products carrying claims in a 2005 survey of magazine advertisements <sup>†</sup>**

<b>Food Category <sup>‡</sup></b>	<b>Number of products located on top 20 manufacturers' websites</b>	<b>Total number of products with website claims</b>	<b>% of products with website claims</b>	<b>Total number of website claims</b>	<b>Mean number of website claims per product</b>
Breakfast cereals	1	1	100	2	2.0
Cake mixes	2	2	100	3	1.5
Canned seafood	10	10	100	55	5.5
Drink bases	1	1	100	1	1.0
Milk	1	1	100	1	1.0
Teas	38	38	100	798	21.0
Ice creams	2	1	50.0	2	1.0
Canned fruit	12	5	41.7	15	1.3
Fat spreads	5	2	40.0	3	0.6
<b>Total (including categories with no claims)</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>37.0</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>12.2</b>

<sup>†</sup> These products were those for which a health claim was made in a print media advertisement as revealed in a 2005 survey of magazine advertisements (unpublished data) and which were not included in Table 1. The magazines surveyed were: Australian Women's weekly, Woman's Day, New Idea, That's Life, Super Food Ideas, Readers Digest, TV Week, Better Homes & Gardens, Take 5, Cosmopolitan, Cleo, NW, Australian Good Taste, Dolly, Who Weekly, K-Zone, Girlfriend, Burkes Backyard, Australian House & Garden, FHM, Delicious, Marie Claire, Ralph, Fresh, Australian Family Circle, New Woman, Total Girl, Weight Watchers, Australian Home Beautiful, Donna Hay.

<sup>‡</sup> The 47 food categories used in the 2003 food product survey <sup>11</sup> were used in the current survey. However, the Internet searches did not reveal advertised website claims from all categories. Those food categories without claims have been omitted from the above table.



**Table 5. Health benefits recorded in the high level and therapeutic claims found from all three Internet search strategies**

<b>Claim type</b>	<b>Health benefit claimed</b>	<b>Nutrient/property</b>	<b>% of claims</b>
Biomarker maintenance claim (n = 11)	Blood glucose levels	Fibre	45.5
	Cholesterol	Plant Sterols	27.3
	Blood glucose levels	Glycaemic Index	9.1
	Homocysteine	Vits B6, B12 & folate	9.1
	Triglycerides	Omega 3	9.1
			<b>100.0%</b>
Biomarker enhancement claim (n = 152)	Blood glucose	Catechins	25.0
	Blood pressure	Catechins	25.0
	Cholesterol	Catechins	25.0
	Cholesterol	Vitamin E	5.9
	Blood pressure	DHA	4.6
	Blood pressure	Protein	3.9
	Cholesterol	Unsaturated oils	3.3
	Blood glucose	Glycaemic Index	2.6
	Cholesterol	Fibre	2.0
	Blood glucose	Fibre	1.3
	Cholesterol	Plant sterols	0.7
	Cholesterol	Omega 3 and 6	0.7
			<b>100.0%</b>
Risk reduction claim in relation to a serious disease or condition (n = 435)	Cardiovascular disease	Whole food	24.7
	Cancer	Flavonoids	16.1
	Cardiovascular disease	Flavonoids	16.1
	Osteoporosis	Calcium	9.8
	Cancer	Whole food	8.6
	Death	Whole food	8.6
	Cancer	Soy	2.3
	Cardiovascular disease	Soy	2.3
	Arthritis	DHA	1.6
	Cardiovascular disease	DHA	1.6
	Depression	DHA	1.6
	Cancer	Fibre	1.4
	Cardiovascular disease	Grain foods	1.4
	Diabetes	Grain foods	1.4
	Neural tube defects	Folate	0.9
	Cancer	Lycopene	0.5
	Cardiovascular disease	Lycopene	0.5
	Gum disease	Fluoride	0.5
Cardiovascular disease	Vitamin E	0.2	
Cardiovascular disease	Vitamin C	0.2	
			<b>100.0%</b>

Whole-of-diet claim- serious (n = 1)	Cholesterol	Whole food	100.0
			<b>100.0%</b>
Performance claim – serious (n = 1)	Immune system	Probiotics	100.0
			<b>100.0%</b>
Slimming (n = 20)	Weight loss	Fibre	50.0
	Weight loss	Whole food	50.0
			<b>100.0%</b>
Therapeutic claim (n = 293)	Cardiovascular disease	Whole food	25.9
	Atherosclerosis	Antioxidants	13.0
	Cancer	Antioxidants	13.0
	Cancer	Whole food	13.0
	Dental Caries	Fluoride	13.0
	Blood pressure	Catechins	13.0
	Diarrhoea	Probiotics	6.5
	Osteoporosis	Calcium	1.0
	Cold and Flu	Whole food	0.7
	Age related health risks	Antioxidants	0.3
	Cardiovascular disease	Omega 3	0.3
	Cardiovascular disease	Vitamin C	0.3
			<b>100.0%</b>