



November 2025

Play with the
Nutri-Score in
our call to
action

THE NUTRI-SCORE DECODED

THE NUTRI-SCORE DECODED

Functioning, Strengths, and Limitations

We've all seen the **Nutri-Score** on many everyday products: cereals, yogurts, ready meals...

This colorful **logo** aims to **simplify nutritional information** to help consumers make more informed choices.

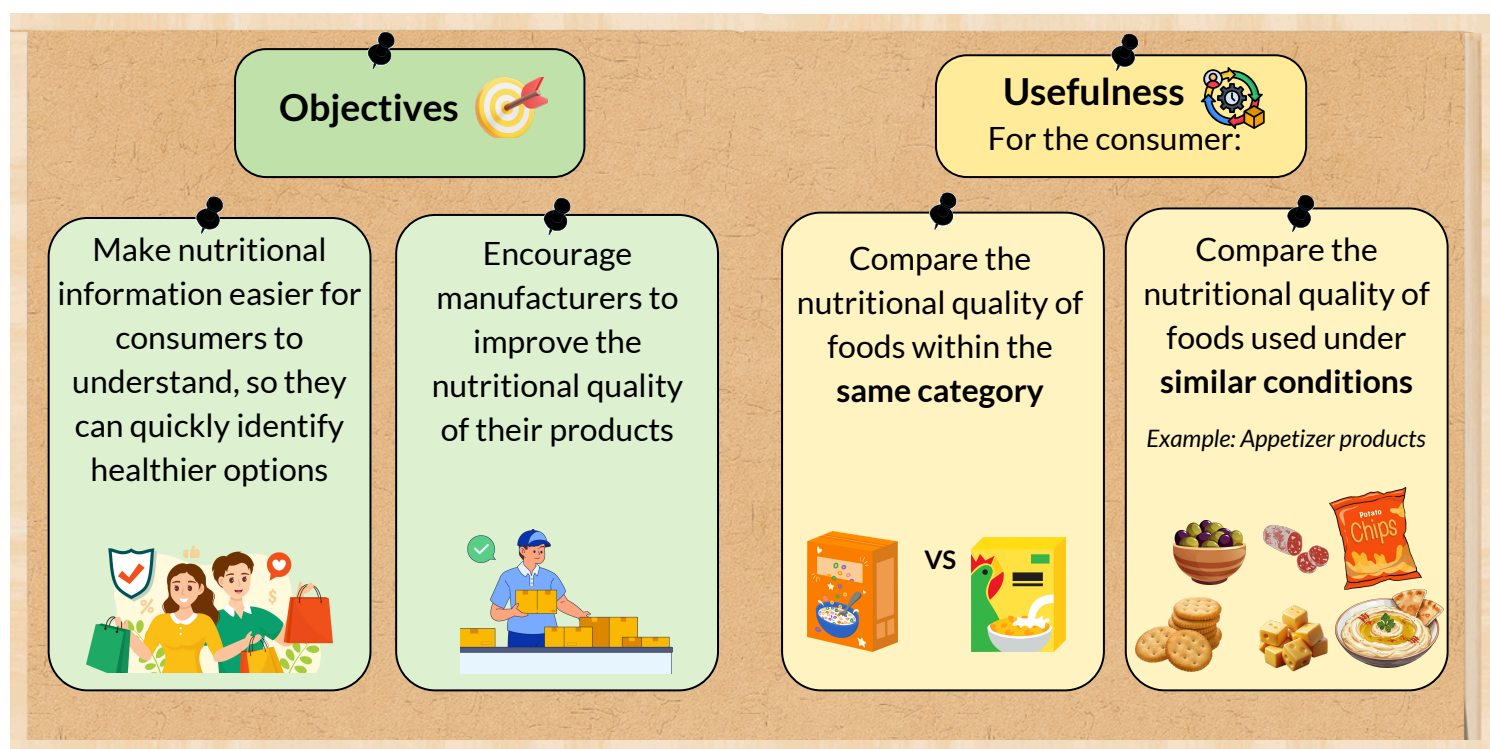
But what mechanisms are used to assess nutritional **quality**, **and how reliable are they?**



In this newsletter, we invite you to take a closer look at what lies behind the **Nutri-Score**.

✦ The Nutri-Score: Designed to Guide You Better

Displayed on the front of packaging, the **Nutri-Score** was developed by Professor Hercberg's scientific team to make nutritional information **easier** to read. It **helps** consumers **make healthier choices** through a simple and intuitive color-coded system.



✦ How is it assigned?

The Nutri-Score is based on a **five-color scale associated with letters** ranging from :

Dark green:

best nutritional
quality

Dark orange:

least favorable



Calculation of the Nutri-Score



The calculation applies **universally** to all food products, **except** for a few specific cases for which adapted methods have been defined.

The nutritional criteria considered are divided into two categories:

To limit:

(per 100 g)

- Energy (kJ/kcal)
- + Saturated fats (g)
- + Sugars (g)
- + Salt (g)



To favor :

(per 100 g)

- Fiber (g)
- + Proteins (g)
- + Fruits, vegetables,
and legumes (%)



-17



Final score

*The lower the number of
points, the better the
nutritional quality and thus,
the better the Nutri-Score.*



Special cases



Specific adjustments have been made to the algorithm for **beverages**, **cheeses**, added **fats**, and **nuts**.

These adaptations aim to **better reflect the diversity of nutritional quality** within these food groups and ensure **greater consistency** with public health recommendations.

For example, for beverages, the “sweeteners” criterion has been added to the “to limit” list.

Example



Calculation of the Nutri-Score for a plain whole-milk yogurt:

To limit:	Per 100 g	Theoretical points	Yogurt points
Energy	267 KJ	0-10	0
Saturated fats	2.2 g	0-10	2
Sugars	4,5 g	0-15	1
Sal	0,13 g	0-20	0
Total negative points			3

To favor:	Per 100 g	Theoretical points	Yogurt points
Fiber	3.8g	0-7	1
Proteins	0	0-5	0
Fruits, vegetables, and legumes	0	0-5	0
Total positive points			1

Final score = negative points – positive points

Assigned Nutri-Score:



You can test the Nutri-Score yourself using the official algorithm available on the [Santé publique France](https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/).

Nutri-Score labeling

Introduced in **France in 2017**, the Nutri-Score has since been **adopted by several European countries**, including Belgium, Switzerland, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

Displaying the Nutri-Score is not mandatory. Companies that choose to include it on their products must apply for authorization from Santé publique France.



✦ Evolution of the Nutri-Score



In 2023, the European Nutri-Score Scientific Committee revised the algorithm to **better reflect current nutritional recommendations**. The new Nutri-Score has been implemented in France since March 2025.

This revised algorithm aligns the Nutri-Score more closely with dietary guidelines — increasing consistency from 63% to 85%.

Scoring criteria have been strengthened: sugary drinks, certain ready meals, and foods high in poor-quality fats now receive lower scores. Foods containing healthy fats, such as certain oils, are rated more favorably. Examples:



Olive oil



Raisin cookies



Oat milk



Oven-baked plain chips



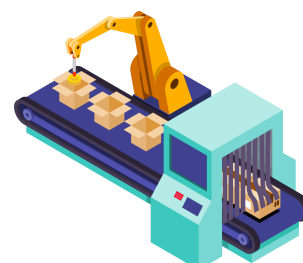
Note: The Nutri-Score shown on packaging may not always be up to date. During the transition period, a new logo distinguishes products calculated with the updated algorithm until all labels are refreshed.

✦ Limitations of the Nutri-Score

To make the best use of the **Nutri-Score** in daily life, it's important to understand its **limits**:

Processing level: a missing criterion

The **level of food processing** is not directly considered in the score, even though it has a direct impact on our health, especially by changing the structure of food and by adding additives.





100 g ≠ your plate

The Nutri-Score is calculated per **100 g** or 100 mL, which doesn't always reflect real serving sizes. A product rated **C or D** may still fit into a balanced diet if consumed in **small amounts** (e.g., a piece of cheese, a square of dark chocolate, or a drizzle of walnut oil). Conversely, an **A or B** rating **doesn't mean the product should be eaten without moderation**.

Key nutrients overlooked

The system **doesn't directly take into account vitamins and minerals**, which are essential for good health.



Sweeteners not accounted for

The Nutri-Score **doesn't penalize the use of sweeteners in solid foods**, while they do generate negative points in beverages.

Difficulty assessing fats

The Nutri-Score has difficulty **distinguishing between types of fats** (vegetable vs. animal, saturated vs. unsaturated). For example, in cheeses, some studies show that the current criteria don't fully reflect the real health impact of these fats, especially regarding cardiovascular risk.



Whole vs. refined grains

The Nutri-Score doesn't always **sufficiently distinguish between whole-grain and refined-grain products**.

For instance, refined pasta may score an A, even though whole-grain pasta offers greater nutritional and health benefits.

Limited effectiveness and understanding

Current studies suggest that the Nutri-Score has a **limited long-term influence on consumer choices**, as people don't consistently switch to better-rated products.



✦ Conclusion



The **Nutri-Score** is a practical tool for **quickly comparing products** on the shelf, but it **shouldn't be seen as an absolute health indicator**.

It can help you make more **balanced choices**, especially when combined with careful label reading and a varied, diverse diet that meets your nutritional needs.



Did You Know?



#NutriBuzz: The Numbers Everyone's Talking About



Over 7,000 tweets mentioned the Nutri-Score in France...in 2022 alone!

Water: The Undisputed Champion



Water is the only beverage that always earns a Nutri-Score A.

Not Rated A, but Still Great for You!



Even though oils can't reach a Nutri-Score A, some, like olive oil and rapeseed oil are valuable allies for your health.

"Pure Juice," but Not Perfect!



Even without added sugars, 100% pure fruit juices are still high in sugar and low in fiber, which limits their overall nutritional value.

Outside the Nutri-Score



The Nutri-Score does not apply to certain specific products such as: baby food (ages 0-3), sports nutrition, and special medical formulas.

At Restaurants and for Bulk Products Too?



France's National Nutrition and Health Program (PNNS) plans to extend the Nutri-Score to restaurant meals and bulk-sold products.

Nutrition Challenge of the Week!



Before looking at their labels, think of three products from your pantry or the supermarket and try to guess their Nutri-Score.

Consider their ingredients – sugar, salt, and fat content – then compare your guesses to the actual score displayed.

		Example	Product 1	Product 2	Product 3
Product	●●	Plain canned sardines	_____	_____	_____
Guessed Nutri-Score	●●	D	_____	_____	_____
Actual Nutri-Score	●●	B	_____	_____	_____

Note: The Nutri-Score shown on packaging is not always up to date. During the transition period, a new logo differentiates products calculated with the revised algorithm, until all labels have been updated.



✦ References

- Hercberg, S., Galan, P., Julia, C., Meirhaeghe, A. A., Deschasaux-Tanguy, M., Kesse-Guyot, E., Srouf, B., Fezeu, L., Agaesse, C., Peneau, S., Vanhelst, J., Bellicha, A., Yvrou, P., Verdot, C., Allès, B., Baudry, J., Andreeva, V., & Touvier, M. (s.d.). Le logo nutritionnel Nutri-Score : justifications, bases scientifiques, mode d'emploi, intérêt et limites, déploiement et mise à jour. Le blog Nutri-Score, Équipe de Recherche en Épidémiologie Nutritionnelle (U1153 Inserm/Inrae/CNAM/Université Sorbonne Paris Nord). <https://nutriscore.blog/2025/09/20/le-logo-nutritionnel-Nutri-Score-justifications-bases-scientifiques-mode-demploi-interet-et-limites-deploiement-et-mise-a-jour/>
- Julia C, Hercberg S (2017) Nutri-Score: evidence of the effectiveness of the French front-of-pack nutrition label. *Ernahrungs Umschau* 64(12): 181–187
- Merz, B., Temme, E., Alexiou, H., et al. (2024). Nutri-Score 2023 update. *Nature Food*, 5(1), 102–110. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43016-024-00920-3>
- Ministère des Solidarités et de la Santé. (2022). Nutri-Score : Évaluation du logo nutritionnel Nutri-Score pour 2021.
- Ministère de la Santé. (2024, 9 août). Nutri-Score : un étiquetage nutritionnel pour favoriser une alimentation équilibrée. <https://sante.gouv.fr/prevention-en-sante/preserver-sa-sante/nutrition/Nutri-Score/article/Nutri-Score-un-etiquetage-nutritionnel-pour-favoriser-une-alimentation>
- Peters, S., & Verhagen, H. (2022). An Evaluation of the Nutri-Score System along the Reasoning for Scientific Substantiation of Health Claims in the EU-A Narrative Review. *Foods*, 11 (16): 2426.
- Santé publique France. (2025, février 28). Comment bien utiliser le Nutri-Score ? Manger Bouger. <https://www.mangerbouger.fr/manger-mieux/s-informer-sur-les-produits-qu-on-achete/nouveau-Nutri-Score/comment-bien-utiliser-le-Nutri-Score>
- Santé publique France. (2025, avril 17). Comment calcule-t-on le Nutri-Score ? Manger Bouger. <https://www.mangerbouger.fr/manger-mieux/s-informer-sur-les-produits-qu-on-achete/nouveau-Nutri-Score/comment-calcule-t-on-le-Nutri-Score>
- Santé publique France. (2025, février 28). Le Nutri-Score pour mieux manger en un coup d'œil. Manger Bouger. <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/determinants-de-sante/nutrition-et-activite-physique/documents/brochure/le-Nutri-Score-pour-mieux-manger-en-un-coup-d-oeil>
- Santé publique France. (2025). Nutri-Score. Santé publique France. <https://santepubliquefrance.fr/determinants-de-sante/nutrition-et-activite-physique/articles/Nutri-Score>
- Santé publique France. (2021). 7 pays européens se sont engagés à faciliter le déploiement du Nutri-Score. Santé publique France. <https://santepubliquefrance.fr/presse/2021/7-pays-europeens-se-sont-engages-a-faciliter-le-deploiement-du-Nutri-Score>
- Santé publique France. (2025, 17 mars). Règlement d'usage de la Marque « Nutri-Score » (Version 17 mars 2025). Santé publique France.
- Scientific Committee of the Nutri-Score. (2022). Update of the Nutri-Score algorithm: Update report from the Scientific Committee of the Nutri-Score.
- Scientific Committee of the Nutri-Score. (2023, February 1). Update of the Nutri-Score algorithm for beverages: Second update report from the Scientific Committee of the Nutri-Score (V2–2023). Report voted on February 1, 2023. Santé publique France. Publié le 24 avril 2023.
- Stiletto, A., Cei, L., & Trestini, S. (2023). A Little Bird Told Me... Nutri-Score Panoramas from a Flight over Europe, Connecting Science and Society. *Nutrients*, 15(15), 3367. <https://doi.org/10.3390/nu15153367>
- Włodarek D, Dobrowolski H. Fantastic Foods and Where to Find Them-Advantages and Disadvantages of Nutri-Score in the Search for Healthier Food. *Nutrients*. 2022 Nov 16;14(22):4843. doi: 10.3390/nu14224843. PMID: 36432529; PMCID: PMC9694186.