

FDA going after sugar labeling

By Deena Shanker, Bloomberg

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently ordered up new nutrition labels for cereal boxes, candy bars, and every other packaged food item in the supermarket. Soon, they will list not just how much sugar is inside, but whether that sugar was naturally occurring, as in raisins, or added later, as on the flakes that come with them.

Though this additional information won't be required until next year, health advocates predicted that such legally mandated disclosure would deliver less-sugary foods in its wake. They were right.

Four Twizzler strawberry twists have the same sugar content as an apple, but clearly the fruit is a better choice—in no small part because it comes with fiber and Vitamin C. The FDA decision recognized that the source of sugar matters, and that listing “Sugars” alone doesn't reflect that. The agency decision attempts to outsmart food manufacturers that commonly call added sugar ingredients by other names, such as high fructose corn syrup, agave, and fruit juice. Current-ingredients lists and nutrition-facts panels, the FDA was saying, can be surprisingly deceptive.

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