

Study finds 1 in 2 pre-mixed alcohol products feature misleading nutrition claims

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New research shows that alcohol manufacturers are adding nutrition messages to their pre-mixed alcohol products to lure in consumers, a move that public health experts say should prompt regulators to take

urgent action to restrict claims.

[The study](#), published in the *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health*, analyzed almost 500 pre-mixed products found in three major [alcohol](#) retailers and found that over half (52%) had at least one nutrition-related claim, despite alcohol being inherently unhealthy.

The most common claims related to "naturalness" (32%) and [energy content](#) (32%), while 31% made claims about sugar content. Others related to gluten (23%), carbohydrate content (20%) or being vegan (14%).

Lead author, Bella Sträuli from The George Institute for Global Health says that nutrition claims were found on almost all hard seltzers.

"Some 96% of hard seltzers, which are predominately targeted at younger drinkers, included nutrition claims, with an average of 3.4 claims per product. They also frequently appeared on vodka pre-mixed products (44%) and gin-mixed beverages (40%)."

Research co-author, Professor Simone Pettigrew from The George Institute for Global Health, says it's not too late for regulators to act.

"In the wake of growing awareness and overwhelming evidence about the negative health impacts of drinking, the [alcohol industry](#) is using nutrition messaging to give their products a health halo," Prof Pettigrew says.

"It's a tactic borrowed from the [food industry](#) that's particularly targeted at [young people](#), who are more health conscious.

"We found that pre-mixed drinks had an average of 1.5 nutrition claims per product. These kinds of claims deliberately mislead consumers about

the healthiness of alcohol products, and some are just a sham. For instance, we found vegan and gluten claims on products that are inherently animal product and gluten-free.

"Pre-mixed alcohol producers are taking advantage of the current Australian alcohol labeling code to use nutrition-related claims to promote these products in ways likely to enhance their perceived healthiness, while downplaying alcohol health risks.

"We urgently need more stringent regulation of claims on alcohol to avoid consumers being blatantly misled. There is a window of opportunity to shut this down before it gets out of hand."

Adjunct Professor Terry Slevin, CEO Public Health Association of Australia, says the strategy is a sign of an irresponsible industry desperately trying to ensure Australians continue to drink.

"There is no safe level of alcohol use, and it has no nutritional benefit. There isn't a healthy alcohol option. Regardless of product type, all alcohol is a carcinogen, and alcohol is associated with significant physical and psycho-social harms.

"Grog continues to be one of Australia's biggest public health challenges. We need comprehensive Government action, not only restricting nutrition claims on labels, but also minimum alcohol pricing, awareness campaigns, strict warning label requirements and restrictions on alcohol advertising to protect children."

More information: Bella Sträuli et al, Type and prevalence of nutrition-related claims on alcoholic ready-to-drink beverages, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Public Health* (2023). [DOI: 10.1016/j.anzjph.2023.100106](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.anzjph.2023.100106)

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