

US Agency Permits Qualified Health Claim for Yogurt

ヨーグルトを食べると糖尿病のリスクが下がる？アメリカの食品医薬品局（FDA）は、そんな健康効果を容器に表示してよいと発表しました。とはいえ、「証拠はあるが科学的合意はない」という条件付きの認可です。文中の「credible」という単語は、a credible source（信頼できる情報源）や a credible explanation（もっともらしい説明）のように使われ、「信頼できる」「信用するに足る」という意味があります。食と健康、そして「表現の自由」にまつわる深い議論が見えてくる今回の記事、あなたはどのように思いますか？



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recently permitted yogurt producers to make a health claim on containers of their products.

Yogurt is a food made from milk and special bacteria.

The claim is that eating yogurt might reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes, a health problem linked to how the body uses sugar for fuel. Type 2 diabetes is believed to affect about 38 million Americans.

Danone North America is the U.S. division of a French food company that makes several popular yogurt products. In 2018, the company asked the FDA for permission to make what is known as a “[qualified](#) health claim” about yogurt.

In March, the FDA said it would not object to such a claim. The food agency said that there is some evidence to support the claim that eating at least 900 grams of yogurt per week might reduce the risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

However, the agency said there is not “significant scientific agreement” about the claim.

What is a ‘qualified health claim’?

A “qualified health claim” means that the health effects have not been supported by wide scientific agreement.

Food producers are permitted to make some claims about the [healthfulness](#) of their products, but they also must include additional information to prevent misleading the public.

The FDA has permitted “qualified health claims” on dietary supplements since 2000 and on foods since 2002. The policy formed after the FDA faced legal action in the 1990s because it did not permit food companies to put any health claims on products that the agency did not approve. Lawyers successfully argued that such bans violated free speech rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Rather than fight in court, the FDA created a new term, separate from “authorized health claims.” These claims, the agency says, are supported by scientific agreement.

Examples of “qualified health claims” include claims that eating some kinds of cocoa might reduce heart disease. Another example is that cranberry juice might cut the risk of repeated urinary tract infections in women.

Yogurt and type 2 diabetes

In the case of yogurt, Danone submitted information from studies that observed people over time. The yogurt company found a link between eating yogurt and fewer signs of diabetes. The FDA agreed that there is “some [credible](#) evidence” that eating yogurt as a whole food has good health effects but not because of any one nutrient that it contains. In other words, there is no direct evidence that yogurt can prevent diabetes. There is only indirect evidence that eating yogurt may be connected to reducing signs connected to an increased risk of the disease.

The FDA says that it will not object to a qualified health claim rather than authorizing it.

Critics questioned the use of such a claim. They say it is not based on research that proves yogurt reduces Type 2 diabetes risk.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest is a nonprofit [advocacy](#) group based in Washington, D.C. It is critical of the qualified health claim related to yogurt. It said no single food can reduce the risk of a disease that is tied to overall diet.

It even warned that the claim might raise the risk of diabetes. The center said people might eat more yogurt products that include added sugars including cookies and pretzels—even if they do not have the claim on their containers.

Marion Nestle is a food policy expert at New York University. She said qualified health claims based on limited evidence are “[ridiculous](#) on their face.”

And that’s the Health & Lifestyle report. I’m Anna Matteo.

Jonel Aleccia reported this story for the Associated Press. Anna Matteo adapted it for VOA Learning English.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. **qualified (adj.)** having the skills or experience needed

She is qualified to teach English.

2. **healthfulness (n.)** quality of being good for health

Many people choose vegetables for their healthfulness and low calories.

3. **credible (adj.)** able to be trusted or believed

The news came from a credible source with years of experience.

4. **advocacy (n.)** public support for a cause

Her advocacy for children's rights has inspired many people worldwide.

5. **ridiculous (adj.)** very silly or unreasonable

That idea sounds ridiculous to me.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. What kind of health claim did the FDA recently permit for yogurt?
2. How is a “qualified health claim” different from an “authorized health claim”?
3. Why are some experts critical of the FDA’s decision regarding yogurt?
4. Do you think it’s helpful for foods to carry health claims? Why or why not?
5. What do you pay attention to when choosing food products in stores?