



Issue 1 / January 2012

# Toothfriendly

NEWSLETTER OF TOOTHFRIENDLY INTERNATIONAL



## FRONT-OF-PACK LABELING EXTRA

MARKET SURVEY RESULTS FROM SWITZERLAND

- Winners and losers of EFSA's health claim rulings
- To claim or not to claim?
- New product launches



Just two of many reasons  
for ISOMALT from BENEEO.

Tasty and toothfriendly.



ISOMALT 

**ISOMALT is the only sugar replacer made from real sugar.**

ISOMALT is used in many sugar-free and toothfriendly products because it

- tastes like sugar
- is kind to teeth
- has only half the calories of sugar
- and a very low glycemic index.

**Only BENEEO offers a range of tailor-made ISOMALT variants to suit your specific application.**

**beneo**   
connecting nutrition and health

TOOTHFRIENDLY NEWS is the annual newsletter of the non-profit association Toothfriendly International.

Toothfriendly International is dedicated to improving oral health by promoting non-cariogenic nutrition and dental hygiene. The association owns the worldwide right to license the "Toothfriendly" trademark for guaranteed toothfriendly products.

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The Basel-based Toothfriendly team from the left: Brigitta Zürcher, Hanni Mathis, Kati Weiss, Irene van Loon and Yael Ellenbroek.

## Happy birthday, Happy Tooth!

Thirty years ago, a group of prevention-minded dentists adopted a somewhat radical style of counselling their patients on dietary issues, giving positive news rather than restrictions. Please do eat sweets - as long as they are toothfriendly!

Since 1982, the Toothfriendly logo - the smiling tooth under a protective umbrella - is *the* guide to products that are guaranteed safe for teeth.

Today, after thirty years of oral health promotion, it is extremely satisfying to see that the European legislators have come to the same conclusion. Last July, the European Food Safety Authority issued a favourable scientific opinion on the Toothfriendly health claim used on non-cariogenic and non-erosive foods. What a better way to celebrate an anniversary than to secure the existence of the Toothfriendly quality seal on the package labels of 95 brands, worldwide.

We wish you all a great anniversary year!

Dr. Albert Bär  
Director of Toothfriendly International





### Rethinking Candy

BENEO has launched the prototypes of two novel premium candies developed to intensify the consumers' flavor experience: "Volcano" is a sandwich candy combining hot and cold mouth feel using chili and ice flavoring, while "Crush" has fine cracks under the smooth surface enabling a full sensory experience.

### Smarteeth

Barry Callebaut has launched the first prototypes of toothfriendly "Smarties", i.e. candies with chocolate core and colourful coatings. Meanwhile, research conducted by ingredient manufacturer BENEO confirms that consumers are willing to pay a 10% higher price for toothfriendly chocolate lentil variations if they came to market. "The popularity of sweets like M&Ms and Smarties show that the market is strong for these varieties of candy, and the results of our survey prove that consumers are ready for new and healthy alternatives," explains Dr. Christian Niederauer, Market Research Manager, BENEO.



### Chrystal Clear

Following the success of its Mentos Gum range, Perfetti van Melle has broadened the selection with Mentos Pure, xylitol chrysal-filled gums guaranteeing instant freshness and dental benefits.



## Top notch!

*A few recent product launches we think are just great*



### Vitamin Boost

Swiss retailer Migros has extended its toothfriendly Larry's candy range with new kids flavours. Fortified with vitamin C and bombastic product labels, Migros hopes to connect with both children and their parents.

### Back to Basics

Turkey, one of the largest chewing gum markets in Europe, has seen yet another launch of toothfriendly gum. "No Suga" is a novelty by Kervan targeted at the traditional mastic gum consumers of the nation.



### Cotton Goodness

Zahnfreundchen has created the first cotton candy carrying the Toothfriendly label. The isomalt-based product named *Luftikuss* is available in specialty outlets in Germany.

### Fisherman's Fresh Up

With the launch of its ProFresh brand extension, Lofthouse of Fleetwood is hoping to freshen up its lozenge sales. Available in Blueberry, LemonLime, Peppermint and Bluemint flavors, the novelty is sugar-free and Toothfriendly-approved.



### Baby Boom

German Novatex has developed the first pacifier with no known detrimental effect on teeth and jaw development. The pacifier named as *Dentistar* has been granted the recognized 'Toothfriendly' quality seal.



### Two-in-One

Every company wants to crack the season's trendiest flavors, but few have the creative edge of Perfetti van Melle. Following the success of Mentos in dual flavors, Smint is now revamped with mouth-watering combinations of lemon-raspberry and melon-pineapple.



# Toothfriendly Labeling in Switzerland: Instantly Recognized and Understood

A nationwide market survey reveals that 95% of the Swiss consumers correctly recognize the Toothfriendly label and two in three shoppers prefer a product labeled with the smiling tooth under an umbrella over a simple “sugar-free” claim.

**T**he Toothfriendly label, which is currently licensed to 95 brands covering a geographic area of some 40 countries, has often been praised as a model example of effective, globally-recognized health communications. Developed by an expert group of Swiss University Dental Institutes in 1982, the label is now being governed by a non-profit association Toothfriendly International located in Basel.

Not surprisingly, the logo also enjoys its highest awareness rate in Switzerland where 90% of chewing gum brands carry the seal. A recent market survey conducted by marketagent.com found that in Switzerland, many consumers understand the link between confectionery and oral health, and consciously look for sugarless products. When buying confectionery, Swiss consumers value “toothfriendliness” as the third most important criterium after good taste and pleasant consistency.

Furthermore, in a situation where the Swiss consumer was confronted with four nearly identical products, a vast majority chose the one with a large Toothfriendly logo on the front label. Finally, the survey revealed that over 95% of Swiss consumers correctly recognize the Toothfriendly seal.

Dr. Albert Bär, the Director of Toothfriendly International, believes that the label has gained momentum in Switzerland - and worldwide - due to its instantly recognizable character. «In order to make healthier choices, consumers must be able to quickly distinguish healthier products from less healthy ones. In a shopping environment where fast decisions are made, simple front-of-pack labelling formats such as the Toothfriendly seal have proven to be most efficient.»

How important are the following characteristics for you when choosing confectionery products? (scale 1-5)



Figure 1. When buying confectionery, Swiss consumers value “toothfriendliness” as the third most important criteria after good taste and pleasant consistency.

Which of the following chewing gum products would you most likely buy?

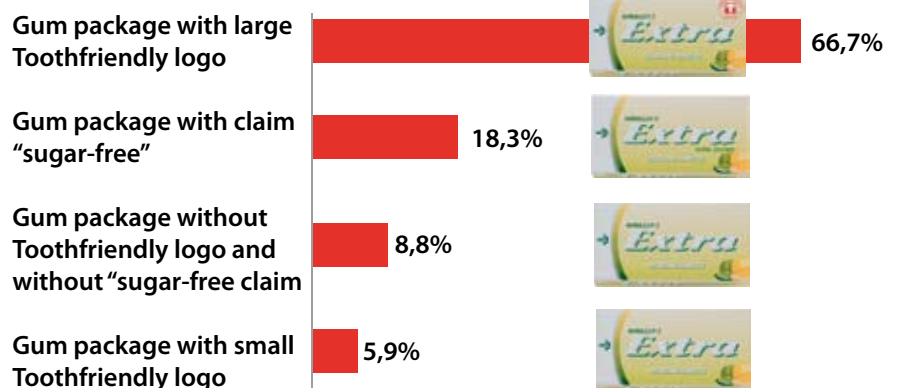


Figure 2. In a situation where the consumer was confronted with four nearly identical products, two in three chose the one with a large Toothfriendly logo on the front label.

*“Consumers must be able to quickly distinguish healthier products from less healthy ones.”*

Do you know this logo, have you seen it before this survey?



Figure 3. Over 95% of Swiss consumers recognize the Toothfriendly seal. A vast majority (84.1 %) has seen the logo on product labels, while 41.6 % know it from school-based oral health education and 39.1 % from dentist or dental hygienist.

#### Survey details

In total, 1002 participants took part in the market survey nationwide. To obtain unbiased answers, respondents were first exposed to a collage of pictures with four nearly identical product labels; one with large Toothfriendly logo, one with 'sugar-free' claim, one with small Toothfriendly logo and one without logos or claims. After choosing the product they would most likely buy, participants were asked questions about the general confectionery buying criteria, awareness of the Toothfriendly logo and characteristics they associated with the logo.

(Source: marketagent.com)

## Europe



## EFSA Says Yes to Toothfriendly Labeling

The European Food Safety Authority has posted a favourable opinion on the "toothfriendly" claim for foods and beverages that are demonstrably non-cariogenic and non-erosive. EFSA's positive scientific opinion re-enforces the basis for the continued use of the Toothfriendly quality seal, a registered trademark since 1982. The seal is coupled with the explanatory term "Toothfriendly" for use on foods which contain neither fermentable carbohydrates nor excessive amounts of food acids.

Dr. Albert Bär, the Director of Toothfriendly International, is relieved to receive the backing of EFSA for the "Toothfriendly" claim. Initially EFSA declined to evaluate this claim saying the dental benefits of toothfriendly foods are not the result of an active effect of an ingredient or component. "Evidently, EFSA has now found a clever though somewhat twisted way to resolve this problem" says Bär. In its report, EFSA makes reference to the US FDA which has accepted the "Toothfriendly" health claim in 1997.

## Switzerland

## New Country Manager for Switzerland

Toothfriendly has appointed Hanni Mathis as the new Country Manager for the Swiss market. Based in Basel, Mathis will have core responsibility for further strengthening the awareness of the Toothfriendly program in Switzerland, the country with second-highest per capita consumption of sugar-free confectionery in the world.

Mathis joins the association at a busy time: 2012 will mark the 30th anniversary of the Toothfriendly quality seal. "We have planned a plethora of activities to celebrate the jubilee", she says. "In essence, we aim to intensify the co-operation with the network of dental professionals who pass on the Toothfriendly message. Thanks to these multipliers, the Toothfriendly logo enjoys a fabulous awareness level in Switzerland."

## China



## China Goes Sugar-free: 2nd International Polyol Congress in Beijing

As the confectionery sales volumes continue to rise in China, the wealthier consumers become increasingly aware of the health problems related with sugar.

Consequently, the sugar-free confectionery is also one of the fastest growing confectionery segments in China, experiencing a double-digit growth especially with chewing gum.

In order to push the healthier confectionery segment further, Toothfriendly International participated in the 2nd International Polyol Congress held in Beijing on 3rd December 2011. Gathering the country's most esteemed dental health professionals, food regulators and policy makers, the event highlighted the role of sugar substitutes in modern caries prevention.

After the polyol congress, the new Chinese pH-telemetry test station operating at the Peking University Dental Hospital was inaugurated for industry use.



## Turkey



## Turkish Toothfriendly Journal Celebrates 10th Anniversary

Established in 2001 to inform the Turkish consumers about healthier lifestyle, the quarterly Dis Dostu Journal has been successfully distributed to 7000 Turkish dental practises for over ten years. Packed with celebrity interviews and health-related topics, the Turkish Toothfriendly Journal is one of the few patient magazines to survive a decade in the turmoil of economic crisis. Congratulations!

## Germany

## Dentists Create Membership Surge in Germany

Hundred and forty dental professionals joined the Toothfriendly association in Germany last year, causing a 25% surge in the membership base. The group now counts about 700 individual members supporting its activities.

The German association's Manager Hedi von Bergh said the whole team is excited about having a strong membership base in Germany and explains the leap in numbers with strong promotions at all major German dental events in 2011. New dentists and dental hygienists may also have been encouraged by the increase in benefits offered for members including a broad range of free educational material.

## Thailand

## New Action Group in Thailand

Toothfriendly International opened a new branch office in Bangkok, Thailand in 2011. Located at the heart of South East Asia, the new action group will further strengthen Toothfriendly's presence in the fast-growing Asian markets and its position as the leading certifier of tooth-friendly products.

"Our members from South East Asia will benefit from the increased range of local services we now can provide," said Dr. Albert Bär, Executive Director, Toothfriendly International. "One of the advantages is that we now can handle PR on a very regional level. Our first efforts to increase the awareness of non-cariogenic confectionery products in Thailand has already been acknowledged and co-financed by ThaiHealth, a state-owned public health promoter.

The Toothfriendly Thailand Network is being run by Dr. Thongchai Vachirarojpisan and governed by a group of Thai dental professionals.

*Originally established as a sub-group of the "Sweet Enough" initiative, the Toothfriendly Thailand Network now operates as an independent unity.*



# Winners and Losers of EFSA's Health Claim Rulings

The European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) has completed its evaluation of all article 13.1 health claims. While over 80% of the submitted claims didn't pass the Panel's scrutiny, most dental claims received thumbs-up.



**S**ince 2008 EFSA's Panel has assessed 2,758 food-related general function health claims to determine whether they are supported by sound scientific evidence, thereby assisting the European Commission and Member States in establishing a list of claims authorized for food. Last opinions were posted in July, marking an end to a gigantic evaluation process.

In total, EFSA rejected about four in five claims saying that the information provided did not demonstrate a cause and effect relationship between the food and the claimed benefit. Some claims also received a negative opinion simply because they did not fit with the rationale of the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation or were not specific enough.

Among the about 550 claims receiving a favorable opinion, around ten refer to dental benefits of specific food components. Most significantly for confectionery manufacturers, EFSA approved the statement that products sweetened with sugar replacers – e.g. sorbitol, maltitol or isomalt – contribute to the maintenance of tooth mineralization if the product in question does not lower plaque pH below 5.7. Also sugar-free chewing gums enriched with calcium, carbamide (urea), fluoride, magnesium, phosphate or vitamin D may continue making dental claims.

Among the favorable opinion winners was also the "toothfriendly" claim. This claim, together with the corresponding "Toothfriendly tested" trademark is currently used on nearly 100 confectionery brands covering the geographic area of some 40 countries. For example, in Switzerland, where the awareness of dental health is high, 90% of all chewing gum products carry the Toothfriendly label.

Dr. Albert Bär, Director of Toothfriendly

scientific backing for the claim. "While the scientific evidence for the claim is rock-solid and has been there for decades, it was not entirely clear whether the claim could be evaluated at all, because "toothfriendly" says in plain language what researchers may describe as "lacking a significant cariogenic and erosive potential". Not directly communicating, nor even implying an active beneficial effect on dental health, "toothfriendly" is arguably not a health claim in the meaning of the Nutrition and Health Claims Regulation."

On November 23rd, the European Commission issued the final draft of the EU positive list of so-called Article 13.1 claims. A summary of all accepted dental claims is presented in Table 1.

At present, the "toothfriendly" claim is dealt with in the EU Commission's list of permitted health claims under a claim which is tied to the presence of sweeteners and for which the following wording is given:

*"Consumption of foods/drinks containing <name of sugar replacer> instead of sugar contributes to the maintenance of tooth mineralization."*

After publication of the list of accepted health claims, all rejected claims must disappear within the 6-month transition period. As the EU's definition of "health claim" is broad, the rejection will encompass any statement, brand name, fancy name or graphical element used on food labels and in commercial communications.

*Note: This text is an updated summary of the article "Winners and losers of EFSA's health claim rulings (Confectionery Production 10/2011)*

Table 1. Authorised EU dental health claims

- Consumption of foods containing (name of sugar replacer) instead of sugar contributes to the maintenance of tooth mineralization\*
- Sugar-free chewing gum contributes to the neutralisation of plaque acids
- Sugar-free chewing gum contributes to the maintenance of tooth mineralization
- Sugar-free chewing gum contributes to the reduction of oral dryness
- Sugar-free chewing gum with carbamide neutralizes plaque acids more effectively than sugar-free chewing gum without carbamide
- Calcium is needed for the maintenance of normal teeth
- Fluoride contributes to the maintenance of tooth mineralization
- Magnesium contributes to the maintenance of normal teeth
- Phosphates contribute to the maintenance of normal teeth
- Vitamin D contributes to the maintenance of normal teeth

\*In order to bear the claim, sugars should be replaced in foods or drinks by sugar replacers, i.e. intense sweeteners, xylitol, sorbitol, mannitol, maltitol, lactitol, isomalt, erythritol, sucralose or polydextrose, or a combination of them, so that foods or drinks contain reduced amounts of sugars by at least the amount referred to in the claim REDUCED [NAME OF NUTRIENT] as listed in the Annex to Regulation 1924/2006. (Section 2.2.3).

# To Claim or Not To Claim?

## Regulation Loopholes

Food manufacturers across Europe are rushing to make use of health claims that have successfully passed EFSA's evaluation process and are included in the EU Commission's list of authorized health claims. For those who did not find their claim on this positive list, the Regulation offers a few exemptions to bypass the stiff rulebook.

**A**lthough the EU Health Claims Regulation is yet to be fully enforced, some companies – such as the probiotic giant Danone – have already begun to arrange their messages in line with the claims accepted by EFSA and authorized by the EU Commission. The regulation is finally beginning to have a major and inevitable impact on product labels.

The challenge is that many health claims authorized by the EU Commission are either unattractive or incomprehensible. Take fiber as an example. One of the key claims approved by the EFSA states:

*"Wheat bran fibre contributes to an increase in faecal bulk."*

To most consumers this statement is either highly unappealing or totally gibberish – from a manufacturer's point of view it would be more attractive to state "fibre is good for your digestive health". Yet EFSA did not see it that way - and by mid-2012 at the latest, all health claims not authorized by the EU Commission will become illegal. There are, fortunately, a few exceptions to the regulation.

## 1. Trademarks

If your health claim is also a trademark - say a graphical element such as the "Tooth-friendly" trademark, you have a transition period of more than ten years. Trademarks introduced before 2005 may continue to be used until January 2022 (Article 28 (2) of the Regulation). New trademarks do not apply - the trick is that you have to establish evidence that the trademark has been in use before the year 2005.

**Check whether your claim could be visualized by a trademark**



## 2. Endorsements

Endorsements from national associations of medical, nutrition or dietetic professionals and health-related charities fall outside the scope of the EU Health Claim Regulation and may, therefore, be made as long as they comply with the applicable national rules.

**Check whether your product could qualify for an endorsement by a professional association or health-related charity such as Toothfriendly International or one of its national associations**

## 3. Food vs. Non-Food

The EU Health Claim Regulation applies to food products, but not to cosmetic products. In the past, some chewing gum products and lozenges have been positioned as dental care products, i.e. cosmetic products, much like a toothpaste or mouth wash in order to avoid regulatory hassle with health claims.

**Check whether your product could be positioned as non-food**

Final tip: Check whether your desired health claim has been accorded to a vitamin or mineral. If so, add at least 15% of the recommended daily allowance of the nutrient to your product and the claim is yours!





**Guaranteed  
toothfriendly.**

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