

FDA Update:

Avocados Now Considered “Healthy”

Avocado nutrition and guideline changes from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2016 will allow the California Avocado Commission (CAC) and avocado marketers to make nutrition claims that have been a long time coming – like “good source of” for certain nutrients and “healthy” to support communication of avocados as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Avocado Serving Size Change

In July 2016, the FDA released new serving sizes of certain foods, including avocados, and recommended daily intakes (daily values, or DV) of certain vitamins and minerals. The new serving size is very positive for avocados as it was increased from 1/5 of a medium avocado to 1/3 of a medium avocado. The updated serving size now allows the following claims to be made:

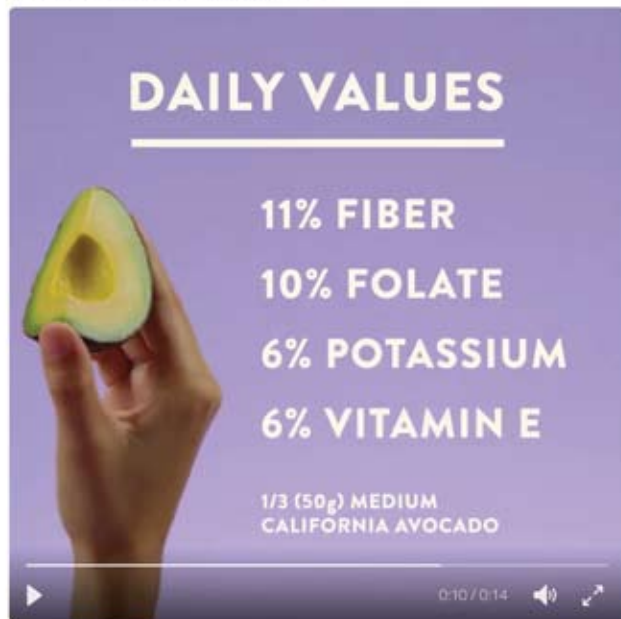
- Avocados are a good source of fiber (11% DV)
- Avocados are a good source of folate (10% DV)
- Avocados are a good source of pantothenic acid (14% DV), vitamin K (10% DV) and copper (10% DV)
- Avocados contain 6% daily value potassium per serving (up from 4%)
- Avocados contain 6% of daily value vitamin E (up from 4%)

Consumer communication via CAC’s online marketing platforms (social media, blog and email) shared educational yet playful messages with CAC’s targeted consumers and influencers. California avocado fans learned about the new serving size and how to cut a California avocado into one-third slices. A CAC video including key nutrition infor-





Exciting news – the avocado serving size changed from 1/5 of the fruit to 1/3!



mation for the new serving size was viewed nearly 50,000 times.

Avocados Now Considered Healthy by FDA

In September 2016, the FDA issued new guidance for the use of the implied nutrition content claim “healthy,” which now includes avocados.

When the FDA published the prior rule defining “healthy” in 1993, avocados did not meet the FDA’s definition because the total fat per serving exceeded the limitations they set at that time. Since then the science related to public health recommendations for intake of dietary fats has evolved. The focus of the most recent dietary fat recommendations has shifted away from limiting total fat intake to encouraging intakes of mono and polyunsaturated fats (the kind of good fat found in avocados).

Until the 2016 change, CAC was not allowed to communicate that avocados were healthy, meaning that all marketing done by the Commission with a nutrition angle had to be writ-

ten to communicate healthfulness and wellness without mentioning the word “healthy.” In 2015, CAC received approval and began utilizing messaging about avocados being a superfood, but due to oversight by the United States Department of Agriculture remained silent when it came to calling avocados “healthy.” Using the word “healthy” in communications will aid in marketing messaging that strategically emphasizes the healthy attributes of the California avocado.

CAC’s messaging concerning the news was celebratory and encouraged targeted consumers to share the exciting news with others online. Consumers responded positively with comments such as, “This is a joyous day!” Others noted that they already knew avocados were healthy, with comments such as, “I don’t need the FDA to tell me this.” CAC’s blog post and social media assets were sent to CAC Registered Dietitian Nutritionist Ambassadors, who shared the content on their social media channels, extending the reach of California avocado messaging.

Both the increased serving size and the “healthy” claim, as part of the ruling from the FDA, open the door to many communication possibilities involving nutrition, and will be woven into upcoming California avocado promotions and messaging across all CAC marketing channels. 🥑

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