

# Report of the European Scientific Committee in charge of updating the Nutri-Score: changes to the algorithm for beverages

April 2023

After the adoption in July 2022 of the Nutri-Score's evolutions for general foods<sup>1</sup>, the European Scientific Committee in charge of the update of Nutri-Score recommended in its second report<sup>2</sup>, released in March 2023, some modifications of the algorithm specific to beverages based on solid scientific evidence (104 pages, 164 references).

On 30 March 2023, the steering committee of the transnational governance of Nutri-Score (including Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Spain, Switzerland and the Netherlands) adopted the changes of the Nutri-Score's algorithm for beverages developed by the scientific committee.

The Scientific Committee considered that the current classification of beverages by Nutri-Score is globally adequate, in particular **for high-sugar beverages, but identified some areas of improvement for milk-based beverages with high levels of sugars, low-sugar beverages and beverages with Non-Nutritive Sweeteners (NNS).**

So, the Scientific Committee proposed some specific modifications in the methods used for the computation of the Nutri-Score algorithm:

- *milk, milk-based beverages, fermented milk-based beverages and plant-based beverages are included in the beverage category for the calculation of their Nutri-Score (so far they were considered for the computation of their Nutri-Score as general food and not as beverage),*
- *a specific component for Non-Nutritive Sweeteners (NNS) use has been added to negative points to allow for a better alignment between the classification*

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/maj\\_\\_rapport\\_nutri-score\\_rapport\\_\\_algorithme\\_2022\\_.pdf](https://sante.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/maj__rapport_nutri-score_rapport__algorithme_2022_.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.santepubliquefrance.fr/determinants-de-sante/nutrition-et-activite-physique/documents/rapport-synthese/update-of-the-nutri-score-algorithm-for-beverages.-second-update-report-from-the-scientific-committee-of-the-nutri-score-v2-2023>

*of Nutri-Score and public health recommendations regarding NNS.*

*- some limited changes of the algorithm components and final thresholds have been defined.*

The changes made are as follows:

- **Component modifications**

- A modified Energy component, using a non-linear point allocation scale, starting at 30 kJ/point, followed by a point allocation scale of 60 kJ/point up to 3 points, then 30 kJ/point up to 10 points;
- A modified Sugars component, using a non-linear point allocation scale, starting at 0.5 g sugar/point, followed by a point allocation scale of 1.5 g/point up to 3 points, then 1g sugar/point up to 10 points;
- A modified Proteins component, using a linear point allocation scale, starting at 1.2 g/100 mL, followed by a point allocation scale of 0.3 g proteins/point up to 7 points;
- A modified 'Fruit and Vegetables' component, with a modification in the maximal number of points up to 6 maximal points;
- An additional 'NNS' component, with 4 A points allocated to the presence of NNS in the beverage (i.e. as an 'unfavourable element').
- For salt and fibres, the components are maintained equal to the updated algorithm for 'general foods'

- **Overall computation modification**

- A removal of the protein cap threshold (initially set for products with A points  $\geq 11$ )

**Finally, the modifications proposed by the Scientific Committee lead to :**

*1) a better discrimination of milk, milk-based beverages and fermented milk-based beverages in particular for those with high levels of sugar,*

*2) an alignment of the classification for NNS-sweetened beverages with current recommendations not to promote the consumption of NNS,*

*3) a better discrimination of beverages according to their sugar content, in particular for beverages with low contents in sugar*

## Summary of the impact of the update of Nutri-Score for beverages:

- **Water** was maintained as the only beverage classified in the NutriScore A category. All other beverages, including naturally low-calorie beverages are classified between the B and E classification.
- The current classification for **fruit juices** was retained.
- **Beverages with Non-Nutritive Sweeteners (NNS)** are penalized and can no longer be classified as B (current classification) and shift to at least C catégories (and D or E when they combine NNS and sugar).
- **Skimmed and semi-skimmed milk** are classified into the most favourable classes allowed for beverages (except water that is the only beverage classified A), allowing differentiation between the different types of milk according to their fat content and with sugary milk beverages : skimmed and partially-skimmed milk are largely in B category, with a discrimination with whole milk in C. Some whole milks from other animals than cows may have different nutrient composition (in particular in saturated fatty acids) that may lead them to shift them towards lower categories
- **Milk based beverages** (including flavored or sweetened milks), can no longer be classified as A or B in the Nutri-Score (their previous classification), and shift on average more likely to be classified mostly as E/D (and C for those with lower sugar content)
- Similarly, **fermented milk-based beverages** (including sweetened and flavoured yogurt drinks) can no longer be classified as A (previous classification). They are also discriminated according to their sugar contents, with a distribution across C and E classes.
- Of note, **powder cocoa, coffee or chicory mixes** are included as beverages for Nutri-Score classification if their nutritional declaration (for 100 mL) is reported 'as consumed' (i.e. after reconstitution with milk or water) rather than 'as sold'
- **Plant-based drinks** (including beverages based on soy, almond, oat, rice,...) can no longer be classified as A. They are distributed from B to E according to their nutritional composition.

- Sugar-sweetened beverages with very limited amounts of sugar (<2 g/100mL) can reach an improved classification (in B) while those with high amounts of sugar were maintained in D/E, leading overall to a better discrimination of beverages based on sugars content.

### Examples of the impact of the update of the Nutri-Score algorithm on beverages



Overall, the update of the Nutri-Score algorithm in the beverages category allowed for a better alignment between the classification and food-based dietary guidelines.