



## **Shape Up America! Alcohol Labeling Poll Final Results**

Today, the American public is regularly exposed to standardized labels containing information about the contents of food, non-alcoholic beverages, dietary supplements, and over-the-counter drugs. According to empirical research, this labeling has assisted consumers in making better informed choices among competing products and, in the case of non-prescription medicines, increased understanding of how to take these drugs correctly.

But when it comes to beer, wine and distilled spirits, even the most basic information is not required on the labels of most alcohol beverage products. Although the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau (TTB) has long required certain labeling, the agency does not require the same ingredient and nutrition information that now appears on the labels of all other consumable products. This includes information about the serving size, calories per serving, alcohol content per serving, and what represents a “standard drink.”

To address this problem, in 2003, the National Consumers League joined with the Center for Science in the Public Interest and 75 other public health and consumer organizations in submitting a formal petition to TTB to require an “Alcohol Facts” panel on the labels of all alcohol beverage products. This resulted in TTB issuing an advance notice of proposed rulemaking in April 2005, whereby the agency called for public comment on “appropriate ways to use beverage alcohol labels to inform the public about the identity and quality of the products.”

After receiving extensive comments from nutrition, public health and consumer advocacy organizations, in July 2007, TTB published proposed rules to require a “Serving Facts” on the labels of beer, wine and distilled spirits. While the proposed rules would require manufacturers to list the amount of calories, carbohydrates, fat and protein in a standardized manner, TTB’s proposal specifically leaves out any information about the alcohol content on these products.

TTB has again asked for public comment, which is why Shape Up America!, the non-profit organization founded by former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop, commissioned Penn, Schoen and Berland’s (PSB) Internet Surveys Group (ISG) to find out directly what kind of labeling information consumers would find most helpful. Conducted in December 2007, this online survey of 503 adult Americans aged 18 and over finds Americans want detailed and complete labeling information on alcoholic beverages, including the percentage of alcohol by volume, the serving size, the amount of alcohol

per serving, the definition of a “standard drink,” and the number of standard drinks per container.

## **Methodology**

The *Shape Up America! Alcohol Labeling Poll* was conducted among 503 respondents who were drawn from a Census-balanced sample of American adults 18 years of age and older. These consumers were asked to complete an online survey of 10 specific questions addressing the advice about moderate drinking contained in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the information that would be most helpful when using beverage alcohol products. Respondents were also asked to review three alternative label formats that were rotated randomly to control order selection bias-- one using only the information proposed in TTB’s rulemaking and the others including additional information about the alcohol content of the product -- and give feedback on the information that would help them make responsible drinking decisions.

To ensure a reliable and accurate representation of the total national adult population, PSB’s ISG used a series of screener questions up front to control for important demographic factors including age, geography, gender, race/ethnicity, income, and education. ISG has access to over a hundred million consumer emails, which it uses to construct representative “pools” of respondents for studies. These measures control for any biases associated with online polls as compared to telephone polls. The margin of error is +/- 4.4% at the 95th confidence interval level.

## **Major Findings**

Major findings include the following:

1. Americans of all types believe that the advice about moderate drinking contained in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (up to two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women) will help them make responsible drinking decisions. That’s why the vast majority of consumers want alcohol labels to require specific information about the alcohol and the number of standard drinks per container so they will be able to heed the *Dietary Guidelines’* advice.
2. Americans of all backgrounds want complete information about what is in beer, wine and distilled spirits. In fact, respondents overwhelmingly agree with the statement: “There is no point in having labeling on the containers of alcohol beverages unless labels include all nutrition and ingredient information, including the amount of alcohol in each drink.”
3. When read a list of types of information that could be included on an alcoholic beverage label, the largest percentage of Americans said “the amount of alcohol in each drink” would be important to include.

## Summary of Major Findings

**1. Consumers believe the advice about moderate drinking contained in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* (up to two drinks a day for men and one drink a day for women) will help them make responsible drinking decisions. That's why the vast majority wants alcohol labels to require specific information so they will be able to heed the Dietary Guidelines' advice.**

- When asked if they were familiar with the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*, 60 percent of respondents replied affirmatively.
- Moreover, when informed about the specific advice regarding moderate drinking, nearly 4 in 5 Americans (79%) say it would be useful to know the *Guidelines* defines “moderate consumption” of alcoholic beverages as up to two drinks per day for men and up to one drink per day for women.
- Although the definition of a standard drink is recognized throughout the federal government and public health community, this definition is not well known by most consumers. Accordingly, more than 4 in 5 surveyed (81%) say it would be helpful to know that government defines a standard drink as containing 0.6 fluid ounces of pure alcohol that translates into 12 fluid ounces of regular beer, 5 fluid ounces of wine, or 1.5 fluid ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits.

**2. The American public supports requiring the manufacturers of alcoholic beverages to provide nutrition and ingredient labeling on the containers of alcoholic beverages. Nearly all consumers say “the amount of alcohol in each drink” is the single most important fact to include.**

- When informed that TTB is considering requiring mandatory labeling on all beer, wine and distilled spirits products, nine in ten (90%) support this action and the level of support transcends demographics, political affiliation and alcohol usage.
- Of those surveyed, 44% agreed strongly that mandatory labeling is needed. Only 4% strongly oppose government action.

<b>Level of Support for Labeling</b>			
<b>Profile</b>	<b>Support (NET) (%)</b>	<b>Strongly Support (%)</b>	<b>Somewhat Support (%)</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>46</b>
Men	87	39	48
Women	92	49	43
Ages 18-34	93	42	51
Ages 35-49	91	42	49
Ages 50+	87	48	39
Income less than \$60,000	91	46	45
Income greater than \$60,000	88	42	46
Children under 18 at home	91	45	46
No children at home	89	44	45
No college degree	90	44	46
College degree	87	50	37
Democrat	94	50	44
Republican	84	45	39
Independent	91	39	52
Drink alcohol	89	42	47
Not drink alcohol	92	54	38

- When asked specifically about the information that should be listed on the label, the public wants complete information, including the amount of calories, specific nutrients (carbohydrates, fat and protein), and the alcohol content.
- When read a list of types of information that could be included on an alcoholic beverage label, consumers ranked “the amount of alcohol in each drink” first (92%) followed by calories (84%) and information about what the Dietary Guidelines recommend (77%).
- Although consumers view specific nutrient information as helpful, the importance of information about carbohydrates, fat and protein did not rank as valuable in the minds of the public.

How Important is it to you to have each of the following types of information on an alcoholic beverage label? 1 <sup>st</sup> # - % very important 2 <sup>nd</sup> # - % important (very + somewhat)	All (%)	Male (%)	Female (%)
The amount of alcohol in each drink	65/92	59/91	70/93
The number of calories in each drink	49/84	42/83	54/81
The amount of carbohydrates in each drink	34/75	29/74	39/76
The amount of protein in each drink	26/66	22/65	30/68
The amount of fat in each drink	39/71	35/70	44/72
Information about what the Dietary Guidelines recommend	34/77	29/79	30/76

- While the public wants alcohol labels to be complete, they also know that not including specific facts about the alcohol content defeats the point of alcohol labeling. In fact, nearly 8 in 10 respondents (79%) agree – 34% strongly –with the statement: “There is no point in having labeling on the containers of alcohol beverages unless labels include all nutrition and ingredient information, including the amount of alcohol in each drink.”

### 3. Americans want detailed and complete labeling information on alcoholic beverages, including the amount of alcohol in standard drink.

Survey respondents were informed that they would be “asked questions about some alternatives labels that could be placed on alcohol beverages containers.” They were then presented with the following three options (order rotated for each respondent to control bias):

Serving facts	
Serving Size	12 fl oz (355 ml)
Servings Per Container	1
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	153
Fat	0g
Carbohydrate	13g
Protein	1g

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Servings Per Container	1
Amount Per Serving	
Calories	153
Fat	0g
Carbohydrate	13g
Protein	1g
Alcohol by volume	5%
Fl oz of alcohol	0.6

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Amount Per Serving	
Calories	153
Fat	0g
Carbohydrate	13g
Protein	1g
Alcohol by volume	5%
Fl oz of alcohol	0.6
A standard drink contains 0.6 fluid ounces of alcohol	

Respondents were asked the following question after reviewing each of the three options: Which one of the following three labels provide you with the information you need to follow the *Dietary Guidelines* recommendation?<sup>1</sup>

### ***Labeling That Contains Alcohol Content Strongly Preferred***

When presented with the three alternative labels (featured above) that could be placed on alcohol beverage containers, more than 3 in 4 Americans (76%) chose the “Standard Drink” label that included the notation “a standard drink contains 0.6 fluid ounces of alcohol.” Preference was consistent across all demographic groups.

Responses to the question *What type of information do you get from reading this label* (asked of each of the three labels) indicates that Americans want labeling information that includes alcohol content and what constitutes a standard drink.

- When presented with the “No Alcohol” label, 18% responded that the label was missing information about alcoholic content. This was the top response.
- When presented with the “Standard Drink” label, 14% responded that the label provided alcohol information. This was the second most often response, after useful and informative.

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Taken together, these survey findings show that Americans public wants complete and clear information about what is in alcoholic beverages, starting with the amount of alcohol. Moreover, consumers believe that alcohol labeling can play an important role in helping them heed the advice about moderate drinking contained in the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Put very simply, consumers question what is the point of labels that don’t give them all the facts.

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<sup>1</sup> The following analysis will refer to each of these three labels as follows: (1) No Alcohol; (2) Alcohol, and (3) Standard Drink. Respondents were not told the name of these three labels; we use these definitions as convenience only.



## Survey Questionnaire

1. The “Dietary Guidelines for Americans,” published every 5 years by the Department of Health and Human Services and Department of Agriculture, offers advice to promote health and on how to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Are you familiar with the “Dietary Guidelines for Americans”?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No/Don’t know
  
2. According to the “Dietary Guidelines,” adults who choose to drink alcoholic beverages should do so sensibly and in moderation. How useful is it to you to know that the Dietary Guidelines defines “moderate consumption” of alcoholic beverages (distilled spirits, beer or wine) as up to two drinks per day for men and up to one drink per day for women?
  - a) Very useful
  - b) Somewhat useful
  - c) Not very useful
  - d) Not sure
  
3. The government defines a standard drink as containing 0.6 fluid ounces of pure alcohol. Would it help to know that the Dietary Guidelines has translated this into 12 fluid ounces of regular beer, 5 fluid ounces of wine, or 1.5 fluid ounces of 80-proof distilled spirits?
  - a) Yes
  - b) No/Don’t know
  
4. Currently, the manufacturers of alcoholic beverages are not required to provide nutrition and ingredient labeling on the containers of alcoholic beverages. But, the government is now considering requiring information about what is in alcoholic beverages.

Do you support or oppose requiring the manufactures of alcoholic beverages to provide nutrition and ingredient labeling on the containers of alcohol beverages?

- a) Strongly support
- b) Somewhat support
- c) Somewhat oppose
- d) Strongly oppose
- e) Not sure

5. How Important is it to you to have each of the following types of information on an alcoholic beverage label?

Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Very Important	Not At All Important	Don't Know
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- a) The amount of alcohol in each drink
- b) The number of calories in each drink
- c) The amount of carbohydrates in each drink
- c) The amount of protein in each drink?
- d) The amount of fat in each drink?
- e) Information about what the Dietary Guidelines recommend?

6. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: There is no point in having labeling on the containers of alcohol beverages unless labels include all nutrition and ingredient information, including the amount of alcohol in each drink.

- a) Strongly agree
- b) Somewhat agree
- c) Somewhat disagree
- d) Strongly disagree
- e) Not sure

7. Below are a few questions about some alternatives labels that could be placed on alcohol beverages containers.

This is the first label.

<b>Serving facts</b>	
Serving Size	12 fl oz (355 ml)
Servings Per Container	1
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Fat</b>	<b>0g</b>
<b>Carbohydrate</b>	<b>13g</b>
<b>Protein</b>	<b>1g</b>

What type of information do you get from reading this label? OPEN END

8. Another possible label that the government is considering is this label:

<b>Serving facts</b>	
Serving Size	12 fl oz (355 ml)
Servings Per Container	1
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Fat</b>	<b>0g</b>
<b>Carbohydrate</b>	<b>13g</b>
<b>Protein</b>	<b>1g</b>
<b>Alcohol by volume</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Fl oz of alcohol</b>	<b>0.6</b>

What type of information do you get from reading this label? OPEN END

9. A third option under consideration is this label:

<b>Serving facts</b>	
Serving Size	12 fl oz (355 ml)
Servings Per Container	1
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Fat</b>	<b>0g</b>
<b>Carbohydrate</b>	<b>13g</b>
<b>Protein</b>	<b>1g</b>
<b>Alcohol by volume</b>	<b>5%</b>
<b>Fl oz of alcohol</b>	<b>0.6</b>
A standard drink contains 0.6 fluid ounces of alcohol	

What type of information do you get from reading this label? OPEN END

10. Which one of the following labels provides you with the information you need to follow the Dietary Guidelines recommendation?

SHOW THREE LABELS ON ONE SCREEN

And now just a few last questions for classification purposes only.

11. Do you drink alcoholic beverages?

- 1) Yes
- 2) No

12. Are you . . . ?

- 1) Male
- 2) Female

13. Which one of the following categories best describes your age?
- 1) 18-24
  - 2) 25-29
  - 3) 30-34
  - 4) 35-39
  - 5) 40-44
  - 6) 45-49
  - 7) 50-54
  - 8) 55-59
  - 9) 60-64
  - 10) 64 or older
  - 11) Refused
14. What is the last grade in school that that you completed?
- 1) Grade school
  - 2) Some high school
  - 3) High school graduate
  - 4) Some college
  - 5) College graduate
  - 6) Graduate school
  - 7) Technical school
  - 8) Refused
15. What is your current marital status?
- 1) Married
  - 2) Single
  - 3) Widowed
  - 4) Divorced
  - 5) Refused
16. Do you have children living at home?
- 1) Yes
  - 2) No
  - 3) Refused
17. For statistical purposes only, we need to know your total family income for 2006. Will you please tell me which of the following categories best represents you total family income?
- 1) Less than \$20,000
  - 2) \$20,000-\$34,999
  - 3) \$35,000-\$59,999
  - 4) \$60,000-\$99,999
  - 5) \$100,000+
  - 6) Refused

18. Do you live in a city, suburb just outside a city, or a less developed or rural area not near a city?
- 1) City
  - 2) Suburb
  - 3) More rural, less developed
  - 4) Refused
19. Which one of the following best describes your employment status?
- 1) Full-time
  - 2) Part-time
  - 3) Not employed