List of Healthier Soups

143 Healthier Soups

By Caron Milham (Dietitian)

There has been a huge increase in recent years with the numbers and types of soups available to purchase however most don’t measure up nutritionally. Many contain little, if any vegetables, fibre and protein and others are too high in salt or saturated fat. With our lives getting busier and the fact that a lot of people enjoy a cup or bowl of hot, satisfying soup in winter, purchasing a ready-made soup is the easiest answer for many. Homemade is best but if you don’t wish to or cannot prepare your own soup and / or just want a quick convenient alternative at times, then I have done the hard work for you to find the healthier choices in the supermarket.

**Want to know how to make a quick & easy, healthy soup?**

My book, the Australian Healthy Cooking Guide available on this website, has plenty of tasty, cost-effective recipes. One of my (and my clients’) favourites is the ‘Pumpkin & Cauliflower Soup’. It has a mild curry flavour and has the extra warmth of cumin and is only 80 calories per serve! You can download this recipe here.

Soups can be purchased as dry, long-life, frozen, canned and fresh. Serving sizes can vary from 200 to 500 mls /grams( gms), although most are around 250 – 300mls/gms. Some soups can be purchased as single serves whilst others can serve 2, 4 or more. Some can be almost a meal in themselves whereas others are more suitable as an accompaniment to the meal or a light snack. Where possible though, add your own fresh or leftover vegetables, beans or lentils to bulk up and increase the nutrient content of your soup. (This is particularly valuable for soups that aren’t mentioned in the list below and for those that are lower in vegetable content)

Cost varies greatly, from a dollar for a packet to up to nearly $10 for a fresh ‘gourmet’ soup. Not all brands I mention below are available at all supermarkets, but all supermarket chains had some healthier options. For a product to be analysed and therefore considered for the list below, a Nutrition panel had to be present on the package, as well as an Ingredient list. For soups where water needs to be added to reconstitute the soup (powder/ concentrated liquid varieties) the analysis has been done after reconstitution.

Out of around 400 soups on the market, there are over 140 Healthier options overall and many of these have been listed below. Based on their nutritional composition these soups are categorised into GOLD, SILVER or BRONZE groups. If you find a product in the supermarket that is not on this list it may mean that it wasn’t one of the healthier options. It may also just mean that it wasn’t available to view at the supermarkets I visited/ or was out of stock. Use the guidelines on this website and in my book, the Australian Healthy Shopping Guide ( Link to page on this book) to determine its suitability.

**General Guidelines with choosing soups**

Choose soups that are low in fat, particularly saturated fat and lower in salt but with a good amount of fibre and vegetables, and if possible, some protein as well, from legumes or beans, chicken or meat. Select ‘lower ‘or ‘low salt’ options, particularly if you have high blood pressure or are watching your salt intake. Choose ‘Lower’ or ‘low’ kilojoule/ calorie (low –kJ) soups, particularly if you are watching your weight.”

**A few ‘Label reading tips’**

BE WARY!

•Pack sizes and serve sizes vary, so it can make it difficult when comparing products. Look at the 100g column on the ‘Nutrition panel’ as well as the ‘Serving Size’ so you can compare products accurately

•Some ‘Nutrition Claims’ on labels may assist you but others may point you in the wrong direction. For example, ‘Healthier’ or ‘Healthy’ are attractive words but are a promotional expression. What are they healthier than? A packet of crisps or a chocolate bar? ‘All natural’ is a similar claim.

•A product can still be high in salt and saturated fat and still be ‘all natural’. ‘Gluten and Dairy free’ claims are mostly useful if you have lactose intolerance or milk protein allergy or Coeliac Disease or gluten intolerance. These conditions can be confirmed by your doctor.A product may be good in one area but not another. Don’t let the ‘good’ claim blind you. It may have less than 1% fat and be 99% FAT FREE, but may be high in salt or may contain minimal nutrition. So, check out the fine print on the Nutrition panel and the Ingredients list, to get the full picture.

USEFUL CLAIMS

•Number of serves of vegetables in a serve of the soup. Check whether the product claim says the number of ‘vegetable serves’ in 1 serve or the number in the can or packet. Many cans or packets serve more than 1, so you then need to divide this number to find the number of vegetables in a serve. We should be getting at least 5 serves of vegetables a day. (1 serve of vegetables is equivalent to 75gms or ½ cup). If your soup is 60% vegetables this means a 250ml serve contains 2 serves of vegetables.

•\*’Health Star rating’. This is a useful guide to compare packaged products within the same food category. 2 ½ \* when we are looking at soups, isn’t good however 4 \* is. Many soups however don’t have this rating on their packs. Just because this rating isn’t there doesn’t mean the soup isn’t a good choice though.

•‘Good source of protein’ or ‘Good source of fibre’, ‘low salt’, ‘low fat’ and ‘no added sugar’ are good claims to look out for. Always check though the fine print as well, to look at the ‘full picture’. Consider the overall nutritional value of a soup. For example, a soup higher in protein and fibre and vegetables may be higher in kilojoules but is satisfying whereas another soup may be lower in kilojoules but may contain little if any nourishment from protein, and/ or vegetables and contain minimal fibre. So it’s important to check out the Ingredients list and the Nutrition panel.

**Want more on understanding food labels?**

For more details on ‘How to read labels’

– Including ‘Understanding Nutrition Claims’ and what they really mean; ‘How to how to read Ingredients lists’ and ‘Nutrition Panels’. More information on these topics and lists of the healthier products in 48 other food categories can be found in my best-selling book, the ‘Australian Healthy Shopping Guide’ which can be purchased from this website.

**Minimal Nutritional aims for all soups**

•Less than 290mg sodium per 100g

•Less than 3 % fat and 1 ½ % saturated fat AND less than 2 % added sugar

•More than 45% vegetables( or 1 ½ ‘serves’ of vegetables in a 250mls serve) [except for some ‘low kilojoule/ calorie’ soups(\*\*LC)’ and ‘low salt’(\*\*LS) varieties]

•More than 2 gms protein per 250ml serve( \* except for some low kilojoule and low salt varieties)

•More than 3 gms fibre per 250ml serve (\* except for some ‘low kilojoule’ and ‘low salt’ varieties). When there is no fibre reading on the label (or if fibre content is under 3gms, vegetable content needs to be more than 60% instead of 45%)‘Low kilojoule/ calorie’ (\*\*LC) soups contain fewer than 210kj (50 Cal) per serve.

•‘Lower kilojoule/ calorie (\*LC) soups’ contain between 210kj (50 calories) and 120 calories (500kj) per serve.

•All other soups contain 120 - 285 calories (500kj – 1190kj) in a serve.

•‘Low salt’ ( \*\*LS) soups contain less than 90 mg sodium per 100g and ‘lower salt’ (LS)soups’ contain less than 190mg sodium per 100g

\*\*\*There are some products listed on the following pages, where some nutrients are just under or just over (by 10%), recommended nutrient limits/ goals for a particular category (Gold, Silver or Bronze). However, they are listed because they exceed expectations with another nutrient criteria (e.g. they may be higher in fibre) and / or may offer extra flexibility e.g. be low or lower salt or low or lower kilojoule/ calorie. For a few products listed that exceed sodium levels by more than 10 %, these are indicated as (‘higher salt’)

**Gold Choices**

In addition to the minimal Nutritional aims above, these have more than 7 gms fibre and 4 gms of protein per serve or more than 6 gms protein and 5 gms fibre per 250ml serve. All contain at least 60% vegetables (including legumes/beans) (equivalent to 2 serves of vegetables in a 250mls serve). Many have a significant quantity of other ingredients like wholegrains, chicken or meat.

**FRESH (refrigerated) SOUPS**

Woolworths Autumn Collection

* Smokey Pulled Pork& bean soup

Woolworths

* ‘Created with Jamie’- Super greens & mighty black bean soup
* Lamb & Barley

Pitango

* Organic Minestrone (\*LC)

**LONG LIFE SOUPS – Foil packs/ tubs (containers)/ cartons**

•Campbell’s - Country Ladle – Italian Style Minestrone

•Campbell’s - Gourmet Moroccan 10 veg soup; Mexican chicken , Rice & corn soup; Tomato with Spinach & Ricotta ravioli; Simmered Pumpkin, Spinach & lentils soup

•Campbell’s - Simply Soup, Healthy Greens with Kale ( \*LC),

•Heinz - Soup of the day – Sweet potato, vegetable & chick pea; tomato; Vegetable & lentil; Spanish Chicken Style with beans & paprika

•La Zuppa – Moroccan Pumpkin with chickpea

CANS

• Heinz – Big N Chunky Chilli beef

• Heinz – SINGLE SERVES: Tuscan style tomato & beans;

• The soup Co.- Chunky - potato, bacon & steak

Silver Choices

In addition to the minimum requirements, these have more than 7 gms fibre or 6 gms of protein per serve or more than 4 gms protein and 5 gms fibre per serve or more than 60% vegetables. All contain at least 45% vegetables (including legumes/beans). Many have a significant quantity of other ingredients like wholegrains, chicken or meat.

**FRESH**

•Pitango – Organic Pumpkin & ginger; (\*LC); Organic Spring Lamb Soup; Hearty Chicken & vegetable soup (\*LC); Mediterranean Tomato soup (\*LC) (\*LS); Chunky Vegetable & Quinoa (\*LC) (\*LS) ;

•Woolworths – Beef & Vegetable; Minestrone (\*LC)

•Soup of the season- Spiced sweet potato & lentil

•Created with Jamie - Chipotle Chicken, Black bean & sweetcorn soup (\*LS)

•Nourish – Eat Well – Pumpkin Winter Sage soup (\*LC) (\*\*LS)

•Marissa’s Kitchen – Lentil Soup (\*\*LS); Minestrone Soup (\*\*LS)

•Coles – Creamy Pumpkin Soup (\*LS); Tomato & Basil (\*\*LS)

•Simmer Time - Fresh Australian Tomato Soup (\*LC) (\*\*LS); Tom Yum Soup with Bok Choy (\*LC) (\*LS); Green pea & golden corn.

**LONG LIFE**

•The Soup Co - Spicy Pumpkin Soup (\*LS); Tomato & Capsicum Soup;

•Campbell’s - Simply Soup - Butternut Pumpkin (\*LC); Winter Vegetable with Quinoa; Nourishing red with lentils (\*LC); Warming Orange with chick peas; Butternut pumpkin (\*LC)

•Campbell’s - Gourmet – Creamy Pumpkin with Spinach & Ricotta Ravioli; Tomato with Spinach & Ricotta ravioli; Pumpkin; Angus Beef with vegetables & red wine soup;

•La Zuppa - Tuscan Chicken & Veg (\*LC); Spiced red lentil; Creamy chicken & vegetable (Higher salt)

•Heinz - Soup of the day – 7 veg with garden herbs; Spiced winter veg; Green Pea with ham;

•Mc Kenzies – From the kitchen - Rustic Vegetable & Quinoa Soup (\*LS)

**CANS**

• Woolworths – Australian Chunky - Beef; Beef stockpot; Peppered Steak;

• Woolworths – Australian Homestyle sweet potato and pumpkin (\*LC)

• Campbell’s- Country Ladle - Minestrone (\*LC); Farmhouse Vegetable (\*LC); Pea & ham (\*LC);

• Heinz – Single serves - Tomato, red pepper & black bean;

• Heinz – Classics - Creamy pumpkin; Italian Minestrone (\*LC);

• Select – Homestyle vegetable (\*LC);

• The Soup Co. -Soup Classics - Pea & ham; Minestrone (\*LC)

• The Soup Co. - Chunky - Pepper Steak; Beef & Vegetable;

**Bronze Choices**

These soups meet minimum requirements and have more than 2 gms protein and 3 gms fibre per serve and contain at least 45 % vegetables. Alternatively, if there is no fibre reading on the label (or fibre content is less than 3 gms) they must contain at least 60% vegetables.

**FRESH**

• Woolworths - Asian Style Chicken & Corn;

• Woolworths - Soup of the season

• Woolworths - Created with Jamie – Smokin Sweet Potato & Chorizo

• Woolworths - The Real Homestyle soup - Aussie Angus Beef & Ale (\*LS)

• Darikay – Classic Pumpkin Soup (\*\*LC) (\*LS)

• Nourish – Eat well - Country Chicken Sweet corn Soup (\*LC)(\*LS)

• Wild Foodies - Hey Dahl- Nepalese lentil soup (\*LC) (\*LS); Kale & Quinoa Soup (\*LC); Butter my Pumpkin Soup (\*LC)

• John McEwan Handcrafted Gourmet foods – Tuscan Minestrone (\*LS) (\*LC)

• The Real Skinny Soup – Spanish Style tomato

• Simmer Time – Moroccan Harirra Soup with Chick peas (\*LC); Fresh green Vegetable soup with spring onion(\*LS);Continental Pumpkin Soup with fresh garden herbs(\*\*LS)(\*LC)

**LONG LIFE**

• Kirkland – Organic Southwestern Black Bean Soup

• McKenzies from the kitchen - Country Pumpkin & lentil; Hearty Veg & Lentil (Higher salt)

• Maggie Beer – Minestrone

• La Zuppa - Roasted Pumpkin (\*LC); Kale, Quinoa& vegetable (\*LC); Creamy Chicken & vegetable

• Coles - Tomato & Roasted Capsicum (\*LC); Creamy Pumpkin (\*LC); Creamy Chicken & vegetable (\*LC);

• Campbell’s – Country Ladle – Butternut Pumpkin;

**CANS**

• Campbell’s - Country Ladle – Garden Vegetable (\*LC); Rich & creamy pumpkin (\*LC); butternut pumpkin (\*LC); Roast Chicken &Winter Veg; Potato & leek; Spring Lamb & vegetables (\*LC); Garden Vegetable with wholegrain barley (\*LC)

• Campbell’s - Chunky - Beef (\*LC)

• Campbell’s - Condensed rich tomato (\*LC)

• Campbell’s - Fully loaded – Angus beef with vegetables & red wine; Stockman’s lamb casserole

• Rosella - Condensed tomato soup (\*LC)

• Heinz - Classic - Pea & ham (Higher salt); Chicken &sweetcorn; Sweet potato & pumpkin (\*LS); Creamy tomato (\*LC); Big Red; Big Red (Salt reduced) (\*LC)(\*LS)

• Heinz - Big N Chunky – Ravioli with beef & tomato; Peppered steak; Beef & veg (Higher sodium); Beef

• Heinz - Single serves – Vegetable lentil & chilli (\*LC); Harvest Pumpkin (\*LS)

• Woolworths – Home brand - Tomato condensed soup (\*LC)

• Coles – Tomato condensed soup (\*LC); Cream of pumpkin (\*LC)

• Amy’s Kitchen - Organic chunky tomato soup (\*LC); Organic split pea soup (\*LC)

• The Soup Co. - Soup Classics – Creamy sweet potato & pumpkin (\*LS)

Some serve one and others more. Some are powders while others are concentrated liquid/ stock, however in both cases, water need to be added to reconstitute the soup.

**PACKET SOUPS**

• Coles - French Onion (\*\*LC);

• Continental - French Onion (\*\*LC); French onion- salt reduced (\*LS) (\*\*LC); Spring Vegetable (\*LC);

• Continental - Single serves – Cup of Soup - Hearty Spanish tomato; Hearty Minestrone; Italian Minest rone;

• Continental - Classic – Spring Veg (\*\*LC); hearty pea and ham (\*LC);

• Continental - Simmer Soup - French onion- salt reduced (\*LS) (\*\*LC); Spring Vegetable (\*LC);

• Continental - Sensations - Vine ripened tomato (\*LC);

• Woolworths - Minestrone with noodles; Pea & ham with croutons (\*LC);

• Homebrand – French onion (\*\*LC)

• Hart & Soul - Tom Yum Soup (\*LC) (Higher salt); PHO Soup (\*\*LC);

• La Zuppa - Lentil (\*\*LC); Smoked BBQ Chicken (\*\*LC); Chicken & vegetable with Rice (\*\*LC)

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