

City trials new drinks labeling to raise health, nutrition awareness

Cai Wenjun

The Shanghai Center for Disease Control and Prevention has started a trial to add Nutri-Grade labels to drinks, indicating their non-milk extrinsic sugar and saturated fat content.

It's one of the city's latest measures to promote a healthy and nutritious diet. It has introduced concepts of a healthy breakfast and healthy drinks as well as the practice of labels on packaging to raise awareness of low-sugar, low-oil and low-salt as well as nutrition and food safety.

The Nutri-Grade system has four color-coded grades. Grade A, the lowest sugar and saturated fat, is deep green. Light green for Grade B, orange for Grade C and red for Grade D, indicating the higher content of sugar and saturated fat.

The Nutri-Grade marks are required to be placed next to each drink product on stores' menus.

"We made the grade based on nutrition standards at home and abroad and comprehensive evaluation," according to Zang Jiajie, director of the Shanghai CDC's nutrition health department.

"Take sugar for instance, Grade A means less than 0.5 gram of

non-milk extrinsic sugar per 100 milliliter of the drink. For B, it is 0.5 to 5 grams and C means 5 to 11.5 grams and D means over 11.5 grams.

"The recommended daily intake of added sugar is below 25 grams per day," she pointed out.

Shanghai CDC said that it is cooperating with six companies, including Starbucks and Chagee, to introduce Nutri-Grade on drinks.

"So far, the labels have been put up at Chagee and Nayuki outlets, while those at Starbucks are under preparation," Zang revealed.

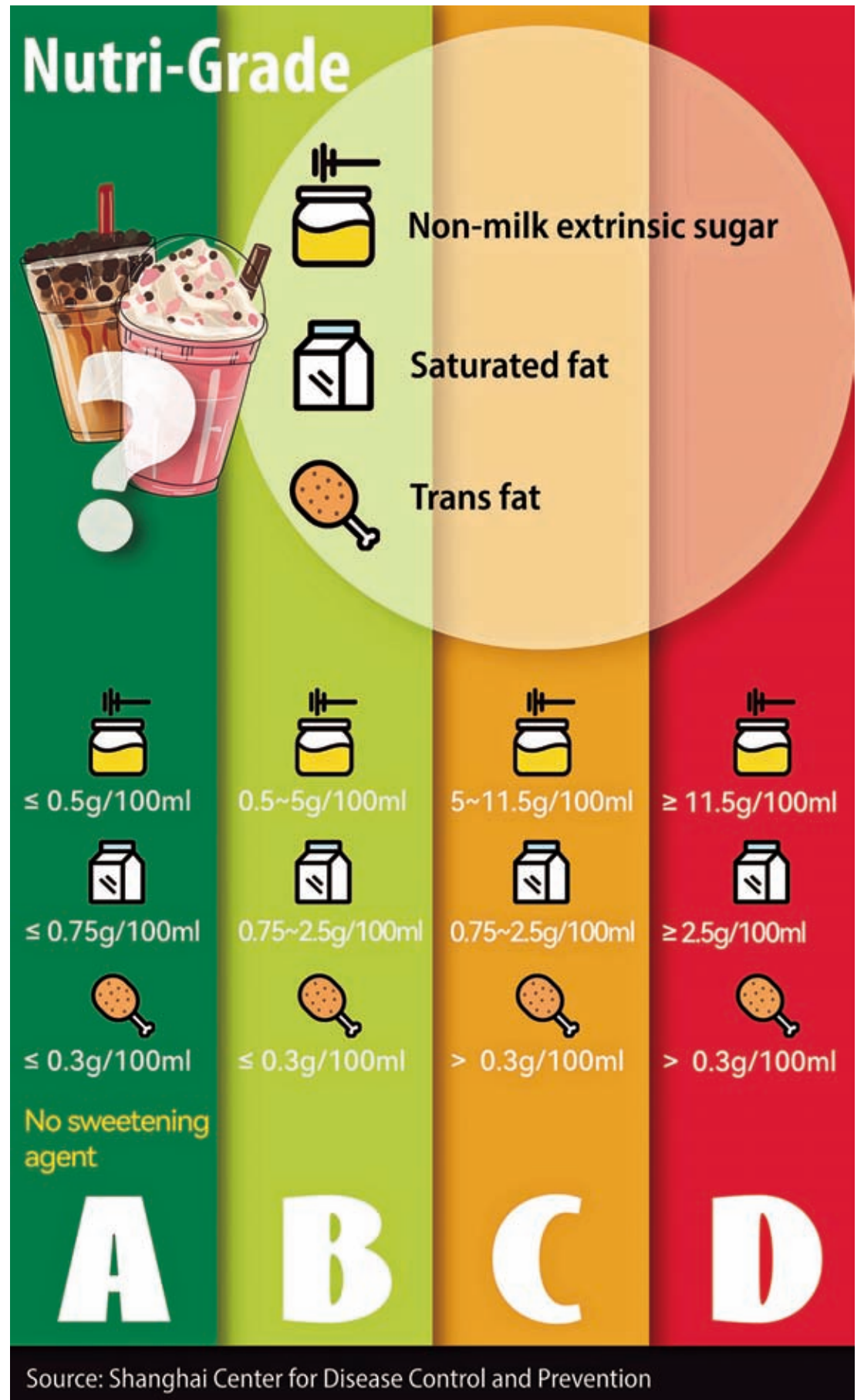
At a Chagee outlet in Xujiahui, the Nutri-Grades are marked next to drink products on the menu. Pure tea drinks are labeled A, while those with dairy products are B, some flavored fruit tea and flavored coffee are C and those with cream and milk are usually C or D.

Customers said the nutritional grades can help them make a decision when selecting beverages and raise their awareness of healthier drinks.

"The nutritional labels are easy to understand and very useful to remind me to choose those marked with A and B," said a customer surnamed Xu.



The Nutri-Grade label is placed next to each drink product at a Chagee outlet in Xujiahui. — Cai Wenjun



Source: Shanghai Center for Disease Control and Prevention