

## **FoodSwitch (with SaltSwitch and GlutenSwitch)**



**Version: no. 2.2 (Android)**

**Last update:** 09/10/2017

**Date of review:** March 2018

**Cost:** FREE

**Platform:** Android, Apple

**Purpose:** Assessment of packaged foods using barcode scanner and traffic light-style interpretation of healthiness, with healthier alternatives of similar foods also identified, where available.

**Suitable for:** Anyone interested in finding healthier / lower salt or gluten free alternatives to packaged foods available for sale in New Zealand.

**Clinical safety:** No risks identified. Uses a large, independent NZ packaged food database (i.e. partnership between the National Institute for Health Innovation (NIHI) NZ, George Institute for Global Health (Aus) and Bupa NZ.

### **Pros:**

- Bar code scanner is easy to use
- Traffic light format is simple to interpret and offers practical alternatives
- Results are based on the FSANZ Health Claims Nutrient Profiling Criteria.
- FoodSwitch nutrients include energy, fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt.
- GlutenSwitch filter also notes the presence / likely presence / or absence of gluten
- Ability to send barcode & photos of (new) food products to administrators – for inclusion in a future update.

### **Cons:**

- Uses manufacturers' recommended serve sizes – which may vary from what is consumed
- Can be frustrating if subsequent food items are not already in the database – may lead to user fatigue
- The 'share' function in the app does not send information about the food item being assessed - just a message to say that you are using FoodSwitch.
- Alternative items suggested often have better profiles in some (but not all) nutrients. Some nutrition knowledge would help to interpret priorities in these cases

### *Dietitian recommendation:*

*FoodSwitch, SaltSwitch and GlutenSwitch are quick and easy to use for simple assessment of products or to highlight nutrients of interest. Alternative suggestions are offered however in some categories the number of alternatives could be overwhelming or disappointing. Many products are not included in the database and user fatigue could be a consequence of this happening repeatedly. Portion advice or personalization are not included with this app – so users with some health literacy and prior nutrition – and nutrient – knowledge will get the most benefits.*