The globally recognised link between diet and health needs to be communicated to consumers to facilitate healthy food choices. Thus this study aimed to determine South African (SA) metropolitan consumers’ opinions and beliefs about the food-health link, as well as their opinions and use of health information on food labels. A cross-sectional study using fieldworker-administered questionnaires was done. Using stratified randomised sampling, 1 997 respondents were recruited. The data were weighted to represent the metropolitan SA adult population (N=10 695 000). Practically significantly more (d=0.92 to 1.68) respondents believed there is a food-health link and that health messages on food labels are supported by scientific research. Respondents’ opinions on health information on food labels were mostly positive, as confirmed by the average opinions for the different ethnic groups. The results identified a lack of interest, time and price concerns, and habitual purchasing as reasons for not reading food labels. Health-concerned respondents considered labels as important health information sources. Consumer education on the food-health link and the use of health information on food labels should address the deficiencies identified through the opinions and use of food labels by these respondents. Representative results of SA metropolitan consumers in this study are significant since third world countries are burdened by various diseases and former studies only used limited-sized non-probability samples. As opinions and beliefs could be changed easily to guide or motivate behaviour this study might contribute to improve food choice behaviour through food label education.