

Buyer Beware

Walking through any grocery store, you'll find all sorts of claims made by food marketers. You'll see "fat-free," "low-sodium," "light," "nutritious," and a whole host of other buzzwords. Remember, it's buyer beware—not all these buzzwords mean exactly what they say, and the labels demand closer inspection. Be sure the "Nutrition Facts" label supports these claims.

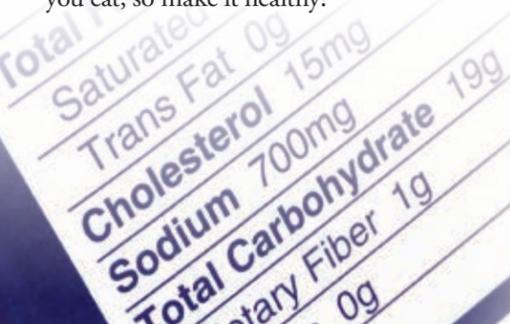


Reading Well... It's All In The Fine Print

We've all heard the term, "You are what you eat," but how often do we really stop and think about what we put in our bodies? The fact is most of us know frighteningly little about what's in the foods we eat, or, let alone, how much of each nutrient we actually need.

With just a little bit of effort, we can become a lot smarter when it comes to understanding what's in the foods we eat. How, you ask? By reading food labels. Food labels are on almost every food item we purchase, and even though you may never have looked at one closely, they're actually fairly simple to understand and packed with valuable information.

The rest of this brochure will explain how you can quickly and easily read a food label—which will enable you to understand not only what's in the foods you eat, but also how you can make adjustments to your diet to live a longer, healthier life. Remember, you are what you eat, so make it healthy!



Here are some quick definitions for the terms you'll find on food labels.

- > An **additive** is a substance added to make foods taste better, or last longer
- > **Calcium** is a vital component of bones and teeth and is needed for proper nerve function
- > **Calories** and **kilojoules** are units of energy
- > **Carbohydrates** are found in grain-based foods and fruits and vegetables. Our bodies use "carbs" as a main source of energy
- > **Cholesterol** is found in animal products. Too much cholesterol in the diet can be unhealthy for the heart
- > **Enriched** or **fortified** means that nutrients have been added to the food
- > **Fiber** is the indigestible part of grains, fruits, and vegetables
- > **Glucose, fructose, sucrose,** and **lactose** are all sugars
- > **Protein** is important for muscle growth and repair
- > **Sodium** is needed for proper fluid balance and nerve function, but too much is unhealthy
- > **Total fat** is the measure of fat content in food—both saturated and unsaturated.
- > **Unsaturated fats** are healthier than **saturated fats**, but should still be eaten in moderation

Although we've come a long way from the nineteenth century's traveling medicine shows selling miracle cures like Dr. Kilmer's Swamp Root or rattlesnake oil, today's marketing claims can be very confusing and even misleading.

Food Labels: Read The Writing On The Jar



Coming To Terms...
Label, Label, On The Jar
You are what you eat. So it pays to make wise choices about the foods you consume. Get the facts on reading food labels.

For More Information

US Food and Drug Administration
www.fda.gov

US Department of Agriculture
www.usda.gov

Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics
www.eatright.org

A P U B L I C A T I O N O F



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Reading Food Labels



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 Cup (53g/1.9 oz.)
Servings Per Container About 8

Amount Per Serving

Calories 190 Calories from Fat 25

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 3g **5%**

Saturated **0%**

Trans Fat 0

Cholesterol 0 **0%**

Sodium 100mg **4%**

Reading & Understanding The Nutrition Facts Label

Food labels are on practically every food item we buy and eat. And for good reason, too. Reading food labels is one of the most important steps you can take to eating well and living healthy.

Food labels provide important information about the food you're eating—serving sizes, calories, fat, important nutrients, as well as salt, sugar, and cholesterol. Because of the amount of information packed on food labels, it may seem a little overwhelming at first. But not to worry, the following information will help you read and understand the Nutrition Facts labels on the food you consume. Here's what you should look for on the Nutrition Facts label.

1 Check the serving size and number of servings.

- The Nutrition Facts label information is based on ONE serving, but many packages contain more. Look at the serving size and how many servings you are actually consuming. If you double the servings you eat, you double the calories and nutrients.
- When you compare calories and nutrients between brands, check to see if the serving size is the same.

2 Calories count, so pay attention to the amount.

- This is where you'll find the number of calories per serving and the calories from fat in each serving.
- Fat-free doesn't mean calorie-free. Lower fat items may have as many calories as full-fat versions.
- If the label lists that 1 serving equals 3 cookies and 100 calories, and you eat 6 cookies, you've eaten 2 servings, or twice the number of calories and fat.

3 Look for foods that are rich in these nutrients.

- Use the label not only to limit fat and sodium, but also to increase nutrients that promote good health and may protect you from disease.
- Some Americans don't get enough vitamin A and C, potassium, calcium, and iron, so choose the brand with the higher % Daily Value for these nutrients.
- Get the most nutrition for your calories—compare the calories to the nutrients you would be getting to make a healthier food choice.

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving

Calories 250 Calories from Fat 110

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 12g 18%

Saturated Fat 3g 15%

Trans Fat 3g

Cholesterol 30mg 10%

Sodium 470mg 20%

Potassium 700mg 20%

Total Carbohydrate 31g 10%

Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Sugars 5g

Protein 5g

Vitamin A 4%

Vitamin C 2%

Calcium 20%

Iron 4%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total fat	Less than	65g	80g
Sat fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

5 Know your fats and reduce sodium for your health.

- To help reduce your risk of heart disease, use the label to select foods that are lowest in saturated fat, total fat and cholesterol.
- Trans fat doesn't have a % Daily Value, but because of the harmful effects you should avoid trans fats at all costs.
- The % Daily Value for total fat includes saturated and trans fats.
- To help lower blood cholesterol, replace saturated and trans fats with monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats found in fish, nuts, and liquid vegetable oils.
- Limit sodium to help reduce your risk of high blood pressure.

6 Reach for healthy, wholesome carbohydrates.

- Fiber and sugars are types of carbohydrates. Healthy sources, like fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains, can reduce the risk of heart disease and improve digestive functioning.
- Whole grain foods can't always be identified by color or name, such as multi-grain or wheat. Look for the "whole" grain listed first in the ingredient list, such as whole wheat, brown rice, or whole oats.
- There isn't a % Daily Value for sugar, but you can compare the sugar content in grams among products.
- Limit foods with added sugars (sucrose, glucose, fructose, corn or maple syrup), which add calories but not other nutrients, such as vitamins and minerals.
- Make sure that added sugars are not one of the first few items in the ingredients list.

7 For protein, choose foods that are lower in fat.

- Most Americans get plenty of protein, but not always from the healthiest sources.
- When choosing a food for its protein content, such as meat, poultry, dry beans, milk and milk products, make choices that are lean, low-fat, or fat-free.

Reading Is Key

Having a better grasp on the terms used on food labels and packaging means you'll be able to make wiser

decisions when you eat. But here's a key point to remember: just because foods claim to be low in fat, nutritious,

or low in sodium, they may not be low in calories. You'll only know if you read the label.