

Understanding Nutrition Labels



Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 260	Calories from Fat 120
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 13g	20%
Saturated Fat 5g	25%
Trans Fat 2g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 660mg	28%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 4%	• Vitamin C 2%
Calcium 15%	• 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
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9	• Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

Food Labels

- Help us make better food choices.
- Provide information about the nutrients in the food.
- Show how a food fits into our daily eating plan.
- Warn of possible allergenic ingredients.

Food Labeling Laws

- **Nutrition Facts** – 1994
 - **Trans Fat Facts** – 2006
 - **Allergen ingredients** – 2006
- Fresh fruits, vegetables, fish and meat are hard to label. The law recommends that grocery stores provide nutrition information where these foods are displayed. Information may be on posters, signs, bags or in notebooks.

The following foods are not required to have nutrition labeling:

- Foods with no nutritional significance, such as plain tea or most spices
- Restaurant foods
- Food produced by small businesses
- Medical foods

Nutrition Facts Labels Include:

Nutrients to Limit:

- Fat, Saturated fat, *Trans* Fats, Cholesterol, Sodium

Nutrients to Include:

- Dietary Fiber
- Vitamin A
- Vitamin C
- Calcium
- Iron

The %Daily Value (DV) helps you determine if a serving of food is high or low in a nutrient. Each nutrient is based on 100% of the daily requirements for that nutrient (for a 2,000 calorie diet).

- Nutrients Without a %DV: *Trans* Fats, Protein, and Sugars. There is no reference value for how much/how little is recommended. Choose the food with the lowest %DV for trans fat and sugar. Current research indicates that protein intake is not a public health concern for generally healthy people older than 4.

Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

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Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 1.5g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%
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Start Here

Limit these Nutrients

Get Enough of these Nutrients

Footnote

Quick Guide to % DV

5% or less is low
20% or more is high

Daily Value – Based on Calories

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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

Note the * used after the heading "%Daily Value" must be on all food labels.

But the remaining information in the full footnote may not be on the package if the size of the label is too small. When the full footnote does appear, it will always be the same. It doesn't change from product to product, because it shows recommended dietary advice for all Americans--it is not about a specific food product.

What are *trans* fats?

- A type of fat that is formed when liquid oils turn into solid fats, such as shortening and hard margarine
- Though this is how most trans fat is formed, a small amount of trans fat is found naturally in some animal based foods.

Why the concern?

- Like saturated fat, *trans* fat raises the LDL ("bad") cholesterol in the blood. This increases the risk of developing heart disease. Heart disease is a big issue since it is the number one cause of death in the United States.

Foods containing trans fat

- Trans fat is found in vegetable shortening and some stick margarines.
- It is also found in many processed and fried foods including:
 - Cookies
 - Donuts
 - Cake
 - Microwave popcorn
 - Potato Chips
 - Chocolate candies
 - Many fried fast food items

Look for Sodium & Potassium on the Label

Salt provides sodium (sodium chloride).

- <2300 mg/day (~ 1 tsp.) is recommended.

A diet rich in potassium can reduce disease risk.

- 4700 mg potassium/day is recommended for adults and adolescents.
- Fruits and vegetables are rich sources of potassium.

- Too much sodium increases the risk for high blood pressure, heart disease and kidney disease.
 - Sodium and potassium work together to control blood

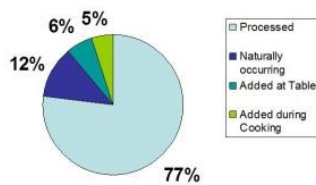
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Sources of Dietary Sodium



pressure. A potassium-rich diet (especially fruit and vegetables) may reduce the risk of developing kidney stones. Foods rich in potassium include leafy greens, vine fruits (squash, tomatoes) and root vegetables (carrots, potatoes).

Nutrient Claims on labels: What does it really mean?

Calories:

- “free” < 5 calories
- “low” ≤ 40 calories

Sodium:

- “free” < 5 mg.
- “low” ≤ 140 mg
- “very low” 35 mg

Sugar:

- “free” < 0.5 g

Total Fat:

- “free” < 0.5 g
- “low” < 3 g
- “lean” < 10 g
- “extra lean” < 5 g

Cholesterol

- “free” < 2 mg
- “low” < 20 mg

A low calorie, low sodium, low sugar, low fat, low cholesterol food has very little of that nutrient present. A food claiming to be “free” of a nutrient is allowed to have only a very, very small amount of that nutrient present.

The terms “free”, “very low”, and “low” are helpful, but be careful, because a low fat food may contain a lot of calories.

Health Claims on Label



(See back panel for message on sodium and high blood pressure.)

“Diets low in sodium may reduce the risk for high blood pressure, a disease associated with many factors.”

Health claims can be made when evidence exists that food with a certain nutrient decreases disease risk.

Heart Disease & Fat

- low in fat, saturated fat & cholesterol

Heart Disease and Fruit, Vegetable, Grain products

- low in fat, saturated fat & cholesterol, containing at least 0.6 gram soluble fiber

Blood Pressure & Sodium

- low in sodium (<140 mg./serving)

INGREDIENTS: BROTH, CARROTS, POTATO FLOUR, RICE FLOUR, CHICKEN, FOOD STARCH-MODIFIED (FROM CORN), WHEAT FLOUR, EGG NOODLES (WHEAT FLOUR, EGGS), SOYBEAN OIL, ONION POWDER, EXTRACTIVE OF CELERY SEED



Ingredient Lists

Most labels must list the ingredients in a food. Ingredients are listed in order by weight. That is, the ingredient present in the largest amount is listed first. The ingredient in the next largest amount is listed second, and so on. In the food to the left, is there more chicken or more rice flour?

Allergenic Foods

- If you or a member of your family has food allergies, you can check the ingredient label to see if it contains:

milk	peanuts	soy	fish
egg	tree nuts	wheat	shellfish
- If so, it will contain a statement such as “Contains almond, milk, peanut and soy ingredients.”

Source: *Eating Right is Basic* 2007 PowerPoint

See next pages for information on how to read a nutrition label.

Reading the Nutrition Facts Label:

Step-by-Step Approach

All packaged foods have labels which contain useful information to help you better understand the food you are purchasing. This step-by-step approach walks you through the basics of the Nutrition Facts label. Work carefully through the five steps to make the smartest and healthiest food choices!

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1st Step: How much are you eating?

- Check the **servicing size** of the food (i.e. cups, pieces, ounces).
- How many **servings per container**?
- Be conscious of how much you are actually eating; the calorie and nutrition breakdown is based on one serving size.

2nd Step: How many calories are you consuming?

- **Calories** indicate how much energy you are consuming per serving.
- **Calories from fat** tell you the amount of calories that come from fat.
- Most calories should come from carbohydrate and protein sources rather than from fat sources.
- Based on a 2,000 calorie diet, one should consume less than
- 600 calories from fat, or less than 30% of calories from fat:
 - Less than 40 calories per serving = low fat
 - 100 calories per serving = moderate fat
 - More than 400 calories per serving = high fat

3rd Step: Check out the nutrients!

- Look at the **nutrients** listed in **gold**. Be conscious of how much you are consuming because high intakes of fats, cholesterol, and sodium have been linked to heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure.
- Look at the **nutrients** listed in **blue**. It is important to get 100% of these nutrients every day.

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Now equipped with the necessary information, you too can shop smarter and healthier!

U.S Food and Drug administration
<http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>

4th Step: Which nutrients should contribute most to your diet?

- The % Daily Value (DV) is based on 100% of the daily requirements of each nutrient (for a 2000 calorie diet) which can help you recognize nutrients that you are over consuming (20% or greater) and under consuming (5% or less).
- **Fat:** Choose unsaturated fats (examples: olive oil, canola oil) when possible, and limit foods with saturated and trans fat (examples: saturated fat – butter; trans fat-hydrogenated oils).
- **Carbohydrate:** Should constitute 60% of calorie intake, or about 1,200 calories or 300g. Look for low sugar and high fiber products. Try to consume at least 25g of fiber each day (1 slice of whole wheat bread = 2g fiber, ½ cup kidney beans = 8g fiber)
- **Sugar:** Limit sugar intake.
The daily value for calcium is 1,000mg a day. This product contains 20% (200mg) of calcium in 1 serving.

5th Step: What are the recommendations?

- This sections shows **recommended dietary advice** relevant to all Americans based on either a 2000 or 2500 calorie diet. This is listed on every package, if space allows. This section will be the same on all food labels.
- **“Less than”** indicates that you should consume less than the upper limit of the Daily Value of the nutrient. For example, you should consume “less than” 65g of fat or the total Daily Value for the day.
- Use this as a guide to balance your diet.

Source: *Reading the Nutrition Facts Label: Step by Step Approach*, Arizona Cooperative Extension, AZ1477, 12/08.