



Why are Nutrition Labels Important?

It is important to be mindful of what you eat daily to ensure you are getting proper nutrition from the foods you are consuming. In order to be mindful of this, you have to understand what is in the food you are eating. Many people do not understand how to interpret what is listed on a food label. Statistically, most Americans exceed the recommended daily limits for saturated fats, sodium, and added sugars, but don't meet the recommended amounts of fiber, vitamin D, calcium and potassium. Research shows that poor nutrition contributes to chronic and preventable diseases like high blood pressure, heart disease, and obesity. Learning some helpful tips and tricks will help you to make more informed and nutritious decisions when it's time to eat.

What Makes Up a Nutrition Label?

Serving Size – This is based on one serving but many packages contain more than one serving. The serving size is based on the amount of food people typically eat, rather than how much they *should* eat.

Calories – These refer to the number of calories per serving. Be mindful of how many servings you are eating.

Fats and Sugars – Not all fats listed are bad for you, but make sure to limit saturated and trans fats. The same applies to sugar, make sure to limit added sugars.

Nutrients – Look for foods rich in Vitamin D, potassium, calcium and iron.

% Daily Value – This is based on a 2,000-calorie diet. In general, 5% or less means the food item is low in that nutrient and 20% or more means the food item is high in that nutrient.

Serving Size →

Cholesterol →

Total Carbs →

Protein →

Nutrition Facts	
8 servings per container	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	230
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 8g	10%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 4g	14%
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	20%
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%
* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.	

← Total Fat

← Sodium

Understanding Nutrition Buzzwords

Fat-Free - less than ½ of a gram of fat per serving.

Light - must contain 1/3 less calories than the regular version of the same product.

Low-Fat - no more than 3 grams of fat per serving.

Low in Sodium - no more than 140 milligrams of salt per serving.

Low in Cholesterol - no more than 20 milligrams of cholesterol or 2 grams of saturated fat per serving.

THINGS TO CONSIDER

Trying to determine what ingredients are in a product can be challenging since there are often long, scientific names being used that the average person does not know. Many ingredients also go by a variety of different names which can be misleading. There are a few basic things to remember in order to help you understand the ingredient you see daily.

What Do the Ingredients Mean?

1. Ingredients are listed in order of quantity. This means that the first 2 ingredients listed on the label would be found in the greatest amount of the food item.
2. Sugar can be listed in many different ways. Keep an eye out for words like high-fructose, corn syrup, agave nectar, barley malt syrup, or dehydrated cane juice.
3. Salt can also go by a variety of different names. If you are watching your salt intake, beware of words like sodium benzoate, disodium, or monosodium glutamate (MSG).
4. Trans fats are commonly labeled as partially hydrogenated oil or hydrogenated oil. This is important to know because you want to consume little to no trans fat.

Additional information is available at:
www.nutrition.gov www.cdc.gov/nutrition
and www.fda.gov/food.

Tips

1. Choose foods that are low in saturated fat. For example, skim milk instead of whole milk.
2. Look for foods with at least 3-4 grams of fiber per serving. This will be things like whole-grain bread, fruits, vegetables, beans and many more.
3. Remember that sugar fills you up with empty calories and provides almost no nutritious value to your diet.



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Healthier Together

References:
fda.gov, heart.org,
nia.nih.gov,
and health.harvard.edu.

Disclaimer: Please note that these tip sheets are educational and are not intended for diagnosis and/or treatment. Discuss any symptoms you have with a physician.