

Make Healthier Choices by Reading Food Labels

Food labels give you information about which nutrients are in food. You can use the Nutrition Facts to see if a food is a good source of a nutrient, or you can use it to compare similar foods. For example, you can read food labels at the grocery store to find out which cereals are the best sources of iron. Once you understand how to read food labels, you can use them to plan healthier meals and snacks for you and your family. Read the information below to learn more about reading food labels.

Start here. Use this section to find out what a serving size is and how many servings are in one package of food. Compare the serving size on the label to how much you actually eat.

Limit these nutrients. Eating too much fat, cholesterol, or sodium may increase your risk of certain diseases like heart disease, high blood pressure, or cancer.

Get enough of these nutrients. Most people don't get enough fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron in their diets. Eating enough of these nutrients can help improve your health.

Sample label for
Macaroni & Cheese

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)			
Serving Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110		
% Daily Value*			
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%		
* 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

The **Amount Per Serving** section tells you how many calories are in one serving of the food.

The **% Daily Value** tells you if a food is high or low in a nutrient. A Daily Value of 5% or less means the food is low in that nutrient. A Daily Value of 20% or more means the food is high in that nutrient.

The lower part of the nutrition facts label does not change from one food to another. It shows general nutrition advice for all Americans. It is not about a specific food product.

Go to www.cfsan.fda.gov . On the left side of the screen you will see a blue box. Click on the down arrow to select a topic. Scroll down the box, and select “Food Labeling”. Then, click on “go”. You will see a box on the left side of the screen that says “Quiz Yourself”. Click on this box to take a quiz to test your food label knowledge. Answer the questions below.

Question 1

Increasing fiber in your diet is very important to you. Which of these muffins would you choose to maximize your fiber intake?

- a. oat bran
- b. honey wheat



Question 2

True or false? These pretzels are low in sodium.

- a. true
- b. false

Question 3

You love desserts but you are concerned about your calorie intake. Which of these is lower in calories?

- a. half the container of low fat blueberry frozen yogurt
- b. the whole container of low fat cherry yogurt



Question 4

You are concerned about your calcium intake. Which has more calcium?

- a. half the container of low fat blueberry frozen yogurt
- b. the whole container of low fat cherry yogurt

Question 5

To stay healthy, you want to limit the total amount of saturated fat you eat during the day. True or false? Any of the following meals can be part of a healthy daily diet.

- a. true
- b. false



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