

HEALTHY COOKING: UNDERSTANDING THE FOOD LABEL

BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



The foods you buy in the store have food labels on them that give you important nutritional information about the food item. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture made a rule that almost all packaged foods must have nutrition labels on them. You'll usually find nutrition labels called "Nutrition Facts" on foods, and these labels include information about the ingredients, calories, and nutritional values of the food. Understanding how to read nutrition labels will help you choose healthy foods when you're cooking in the kitchen.

SERVING INFORMATION:

Food labels include information about serving size and the number of servings in a package or container. Serving sizes vary, but it will be a household measure such as cup, tablespoon, ounce, or slice. Look at serving sizes carefully, because additional nutritional information on the label correlates directly to consuming one serving size of the food. If you eat twice as much as the listed serving size, you'll get twice as much of the listed nutrients and calories.

- [Serving Size on the New Nutrition Facts Label](#)
- [How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Panel on Food Labels](#)
- [Nutrition: How to Read a Nutrition Facts Label](#)



CALORIES:

Calories are a measure of energy, and calories are listed on nutrition labels in large, bold print so people can see this listing easily. The number of calories listed on a label tells you how many calories you'll get if you eat one serving of the food. Nutrition labels also list the number of calories from fat for one serving. This information helps you keep track of how much fat you're consuming each day. Most kids should get about 25% to 30% of their total calories each day from fat.

- [Nutrition Facts Label](#)
- [Figuring Out Food Labels](#)
- [How Do They Calculate Calories on Food Labels?](#)
- [When it Comes to Reading Food Labels, What's Most Important?](#)



NUTRIENTS:

Nutrients on the food label are listed right under the calories. Foods with more nutritional value will generally be healthier for you. Check the total fat and the breakdown between healthier saturated fats and unhealthy trans fats, the cholesterol, protein, sodium, and carbohydrates on the label. Added sugars are sugars that manufacturers add to foods during processing, and it's best to minimize these types of sugars. Look for foods with additional nutrients such as calcium, potassium, iron, dietary fiber, and Vitamins D and C.

- [Understanding Food Labels](#)
- [The Basics of The Nutrition Facts Label](#)
- [Nutrition and Healthy Eating](#)
- [Kids' World: Understanding Food Labels](#)
- [Understanding Food Nutrition Labels](#)



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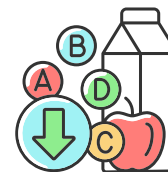
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PERCENT DAILY VALUE:

Percent daily values are shown on food labels as percentages. This information tells you how much of a nutrient you'll get if you eat one serving of a food. So, if you eat one serving of cereal that has 35% of the daily value of iron, then you're meeting 35% of your daily requirement for iron based on eating 2,000 calories per day. Kids may need more or less of these percent daily values depending on gender, age, weight, and the amount of exercise they do each day. Percent daily values that are five percent or lower are considered to be low in a nutrient and percent daily values that are 20% or more are considered high in a nutrient. Use the percent daily values as a guide only.

- [Percent Daily Value: What Does it Mean?](#)
- [Decoding the Food Label: Percent Daily Value](#)
- [Using the Nutrition Facts Label](#)



NUTRITION TERMS:

If you're getting ready to cook in the kitchen and you want to make a recipe, you might start reading nutrition labels, so you know about the ingredients you're going to use. You probably notice that nutrition labels have a lot of terms that might be confusing. Manufacturers have to follow rules about the terms they use on nutrition labels.

Here are a few common terms:

1. **Low fat:** A food can have up to three grams of fat per serving.
 2. **Fat-free:** Food has to have less than 0.5 grams of fat per serving.
 3. **Calorie-free:** Food has to have less than five calories per serving.
 4. **Lite or Light:** A food has to have at least 25% fewer calories than a regular version of a product.
 5. **Low cholesterol:** A food can't have more than 20 milligrams of cholesterol and up to two grams of saturated fat per serving.
- [Understanding Food Label Terminology](#)
 - [64 Food Label Nutrition Terms You Should Know](#)
 - [Nutrition Label Glossary: Definitions of Nutrition Fact Terms](#)

NEED A VISUAL?

Check out our [Instagram post: How To Read A Nutrition Label](#) for an in-depth description of where everything is located and clearly labeled for easy recognition at the grocery store! ➔

HOW TO READ A NUTRITION LABEL



Nutrition Facts		
8 servings per container		
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)	
Amount per serving	230	Calories per serving size
Calories		% 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 6mg 45%		
Potassium 240mg 5%		
*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.		

Limit these Nutrients

Get Plenty of these Nutrients

Footnote

Quick Guide to % Daily Value

- 5% or less is LOW
- 20% or more is HIGH