

# Nutrition

## fact sheet

## Get Smart – Get the Facts on Food Labels

Become a smart shopper by reading food labels to find out more about the foods you eat! Here's why it's smart to check out the Nutrition Facts found on most food labels:

- Find out which foods are good sources of fiber, calcium, iron, and vitamin C
- Compare similar foods to find out which one is lower in fat and calories
- Search for low-sodium foods
- Look for foods that are low in saturated fat and *trans* fats

Use this guide to help you make healthy food choices that meet your nutritional goals.

### *A Quick Guide to Reading the Nutrition Facts Label*

#### *Start with the Serving Size*

- Look here for both the serving size (the amount for one serving), and the number of servings in the package.
- Remember to check your portion size to the serving size listed on the label. If the label serving size is one cup, and you eat two cups, you are getting twice the calories, fat and other nutrients listed on the label.

#### *Check Out the Total Calories and Fat*

Find out how many calories are in a single serving and the number of calories from fat. It's smart to cut

back on calories and fat if you are watching your weight!

#### *Let the Percent Daily Values Be Your Guide:*

Use percent Daily Values (DV) to help you evaluate how a particular food fits into your daily meal plan:

- Daily Values are average levels of nutrients for a person eating 2,000 calories a day. A food item with a 5% DV means 5% of the amount of fat that a person consuming 2,000 calories a day would eat.
- Remember percent DV are for the entire day not just for one meal or snack.
- You may need more or less than 2,000 calories per day. For some nutrients you may need more or less than 100% DV.

#### *The High and Low of Daily Values*

- 5 percent or less is low – try to aim low in total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium
- 20 percent or more is high – try to aim high in vitamins, minerals and fiber

*Limit Fat, Cholesterol and Sodium*  
Eating less of these nutrients may help reduce your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure and cancer:

- Total fat includes saturated, polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fat. Limit to 100% DV or less per day.
- Saturated fat and *trans* fat are linked

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories 260</b>	Calories from Fat 120
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat 13g</b>	<b>20%</b>
Saturated Fat 5g	<b>25%</b>
Trans Fat 2g	
<b>Cholesterol 30mg</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>Sodium 660mg</b>	<b>28%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate 31g</b>	<b>10%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein 5g</b>	
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

to an increased risk of heart disease.

- Sodium – high levels can add up to high blood pressure.
- Remember to aim low for % DV of these nutrients!

#### *Get Enough Vitamins, Minerals and Fiber*

- Eat more fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron to maintain good health and help reduce your risk of certain health problems such as osteoporosis and anemia.



## Information

The American  
Dietetic  
Association  
Knowledge Center

For food and nutrition  
information or for a  
referral to a nutrition  
professional in your  
area call:

800/366-1655

or visit:

[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)

For more food label  
information:

[www.cfsan.fda.gov/label.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/label.html)



## Step Up to Nutrition & Health



**American Dietetic Association**

"Your link to nutrition and health"™

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- Choose more fruits and vegetables to get more of these nutrients.
- Remember to aim high for % DV of these nutrients!

### *Additional Nutrients*

**Protein** – Most Americans get more protein than they need, so a % Daily Value is not required on the label. Choose moderate portions of lean meat, poultry, fish, eggs, low-fat milk, yogurt and cheese, plus beans, peanut butter and nuts.

**Carbohydrates** – There are three types of carbohydrates—sugars, starches and fiber. Select whole-grain breads, cereals, rice and pasta plus fruits and vegetables.

**Sugars** – Simple carbohydrates or sugars occur naturally in foods such as fruit juice (fructose), or come from refined sources such as table sugar (sucrose) or corn syrup.

### *Daily Values Foot Note*

- This is a reference chart that applies to healthy people eating either 2,000 calories a day or 2,500 calories, and shows the daily maximum amounts for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.

### *Check the Ingredient List*

Foods with more than one ingredient must have an ingredient list on the label. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Those in the largest amounts are listed first. Effective January 2006, manufacturers are required to clearly state if food products contain any ingredients that contain protein derived from the eight major allergenic foods. These foods are milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and soybeans.

### *What Health Claims on Food Labels Really Mean*

Ever wonder about the difference between reduced fat and low fat? Or does "light" on a label really mean no fat?

FDA has strict guidelines on how these food label terms can be used. Here are some of the most common claims seen on food packages and what they mean:

- **Low calorie** – Less than 40 calories per serving.
- **Low cholesterol** – Less than 20 mg of cholesterol and 2 gm or less of saturated fat per serving.
- **Reduced** – 25% less of the specified nutrient or calories than the usual product.
- **Good source of** – Provides at least 10% of the DV of a particular vitamin or nutrient per serving.
- **Calorie free** – Less than 5 calories per serving.
- **Fat free / sugar free** – Less than ½ gram of fat or sugar per serving.
- **Low sodium** – Less than 140 mg of salt per serving.
- **High in** – Provides 20% or more of the Daily Value of a specified nutrient per serving.
- **High fiber** – 5 or more grams of fiber per serving.
- **Lean (meat, poultry, seafood)** – 10 grams of fat or less, 4½ grams of saturated fat, and less than 95 mg cholesterol per 3 ounce serving.
- **Light** – ½ fewer calories or ½ the fat of the usual food.
- **Healthy** – Decreased fat, saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol and at least 10 % of the DV of vitamins A, C, iron, protein, calcium, and fiber.

FDA also sets standards for health-related claims on food labels in order to help consumers identify foods that are rich in nutrients and may help to reduce their risk for certain diseases. For example, health claims may highlight the link between calcium and osteoporosis, fiber and calcium, heart disease and fat or high blood pressure and sodium.