

# Label Reading: How Do I Use a Food Label?

- 1 **Serving Size:** A serving is the amount of food that is typically eaten at one time and not a recommendation of how much to eat.
- 2 **Fat:** This lists the total amount of fat in one serving. The general rule is that no more than 30 percent of your calories should come from fat. Try to limit the amount of saturated fat and trans fat you eat. It is found in butter, margarine, oil, salad dressing, etc.
- 3 **Cholesterol:** Try to eat less than 300 mg each day.
- 4 **Sodium:** Try to eat less than 2400 mg of sodium (salt) each day.
- 5 **Total Carbohydrates:** This is what helps to give you energy. Carbohydrates are commonly found in bread, pasta, cereals, fruits and vegetables. Total carbohydrates includes sugars, added sugars and fiber.

**Fiber:** Good sources of fiber include fruits, vegetables, whole grains and beans. Try to consume 20–30 grams of fiber per day.

**Sugars:** Aim for less than 10 percent of your total daily calories from added sugar. Women should consume less than 24 grams of added sugar and men should aim for less than 36 grams of added sugar per day.

- 6 **Protein:** Protein helps build muscle. It is found in meat, nuts, eggs, fish and dry beans. Eat lean cuts of meat.
- 7 **Calories:** Calories refers to the energy in one serving of food. As a general guide: 100 calories per serving of an individual food is considered a moderate amount, and 400 calories or more per serving of an individual food is considered high in calories.
- 8 **Vitamins & Mineral:** This shows you how much of the recommended amount of certain vitamins and minerals are in the food. Your goal is to reach 100 percent for each vitamin and mineral every day.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
8 servings per container	
1 <b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
7 <b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
9 % Daily Value*	
2 <b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g <b>5%</b>	
Trans Fat 0g	
3 <b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
4 <b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
5 <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g <b>14%</b>	
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars <b>20%</b>	
6 <b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg <b>10%</b>	
Calcium 260mg <b>20%</b>	
8 <b>Iron</b> 8mg	<b>45%</b>
Potassium 240mg <b>6%</b>	
* 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.	

- 9 **% Daily Value:** This shows how much of the recommended amounts of these nutrients are in one serving (based on a 2,000 calorie diet). As a general guideline:
  - 5% DV or less of a nutrient per serving is considered low.
  - 20% DV or more of a nutrient per serving is considered high.
- 10 **Ingredient label:** While this is not specifically part of the nutrition label, it is a tool in choosing foods. The ingredient that weighs the most in the food product is listed first and ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Potential food allergens are listed here.

## Make the Label Work for You

Use the label to support your personal dietary needs—choose foods that contain the nutrients you want to get more of and less of nutrients you may want to limit.

### More often, choose foods that are:

- Higher in dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron and potassium.
- Lower in saturated fat, sodium and added sugars.

Choosing healthier foods and beverages can help reduce the risk of developing conditions such as high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis and anemia.

#### For weight loss:

Look at the following: serving size, calories, fat, fiber and protein.

#### For wellness:

Look at sodium, cholesterol, fat, fiber, added sugars, protein and vitamins/minerals.

#### Your goal:

- Next time you go grocery shopping, choose two to three varieties of the same item.
- Compare the labels.
- Which product will be the best for helping you reach your goals?

Source: Adapted from [www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm274593.htm](http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm274593.htm)

