

READING THE NUTRITION FACTS LABEL: STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH

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All packaged foods have labels which contain useful information to help you better understand the food you are purchasing. This step-by-step approach walks you through the basics of the Nutrition Facts label. Work carefully through the five steps to make the smartest and healthiest food choices!

| Nutrition Facts | | |
|---|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Serving Size 1 cup (228g) | | |
| Servings Per Container 2 | | |
| Amount Per Serving | | |
| Calories 250 | Calories from Fat 110 | |
| % Daily Value* | | |
| Total Fat 12g | | 18% |
| Saturated Fat 3g | | 15% |
| Trans Fat 3g | | |
| 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 |

1st Step: How much are you eating?

- Check the **servicing size** of the food (i.e. cups, pieces, ounces).
- How many **servicing per container**?
- Be conscious of how much you are actually eating; the calorie and nutrition breakdown is based on one serving size.

2nd Step: How many calories are you consuming?

- **Calories** indicate how much energy you are consuming per serving.
- **Calories from fat** tell you the amount of calories that come from fat.
- Most calories should come from carbohydrate and protein sources rather than from fat sources.
- Based on a 2,000 calorie diet, one should consume less than 600 calories from fat, or less than 30% of calories from fat:
 - Less than 40 calories per serving = low fat
 - 100 calories per serving = moderate fat
 - More than 400 calories per serving = high fat

3rd Step: Check out the nutrients!

- Look at the **nutrients** listed in **gold**. Be conscious of how much you are consuming because high intakes of fats, cholesterol, and sodium have been linked to heart disease, cancer, and high blood pressure.
- Look at the **nutrients** listed in **blue**. It is important to get 100% of these nutrients every day.

Nutrition Facts

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| | 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 |

4th Step: Which nutrients should contribute most to your diet?

- The % **Daily Value (DV)** is based on 100% of the daily requirements of each nutrient (for a 2000 calorie diet) which can help you recognize nutrients that you are over consuming (20% or greater) and under consuming (5% or less).
- **Fat:** Choose unsaturated fats (examples: olive oil, canola oil) when possible, and limit foods with saturated and trans fat (examples: saturated fat – butter; trans fat- hydrogenated oils).
- **Carbohydrate:** Should constitute 60% of calorie intake, or about 1,200 calories or 300g. Look for low sugar and high fiber products. Try to consume at least 25g of fiber each day (1 slice of whole wheat bread = 2g fiber, ½ cup kidney beans = 8g fiber)
- **Sugar:** Limit sugar intake.
- The daily value for calcium is 1,000mg a day. This product contains 20% (200mg) of calcium in 1 serving.

5th Step: What are the recommendations?

- This sections shows recommended dietary advice relevant to all Americans based on either a 2000 or 2500 calorie diet. This is listed on every package, if space allows. This section will be the same on all food labels.
- “Less than” indicates that you should consume less than the upper limit of the Daily Value of the nutrient. For example, you should consume “less than” 65g of fat or the total Daily Value for the day.
- Use this as a guide to balance your diet.



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U.S. Food and Drug Administration
Nutrition Facts Label Programs & Materials
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm20026097.htm>

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