

Nutrition Fact Label

Let's learn about the Nutrition Fact Label.

Day 1

What is it?

The nutrition facts label is kind of a cheat sheet that gives us nutritional information regarding food. These labels help us to know what is in the food so that we can make an informed decision regarding choosing that food as a part of our overall healthy eating plan.

Food labels provide more than just nutrition facts. These labels also tells us allergens contents of the food. Some food labels also state which country the food came from, whether the food is organically grown and is certified by United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) as Organic Food, and certain health claims regarding that food.

The information on the nutrition label is per serving. If we eat more than one serving of a particular food, we can multiply by the number of servings we consumed to find out how much nutritional content we are consuming.

Food labels will not tell us what foods to eat but it helps us to make right decisions about what food we should eat.

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Day 2

Here is what is on the Nutrition Fact Label

Ingredients: tells us what is in the food.

Serving size: tells us how much we should eat at one time. The information on the label including from calories to vitamins is based on the Serving Size of the food.

Servings per Containers: This tells us how many servings are there in that container. Many times there are multiple servings of chips or juice in a bag of chips or bottle of juice. If we eat or drink the entire package we are getting more vitamins and minerals but we are also getting more calories, sugar, and fat than what we may not want to eat.

Calories: This number tells us how many calories are in one serving of that food. Calories in food tells us how much energy we will get when we eat that food.

Food Label Math Fun

Size Up Your Servings and Serving Size

Serving Sizes help us make smart choices. Let's look at the food label example on this page.

If a package has 2 servings in one box.

The serving size says 1 cup.

If you ate the whole package, you would have eaten 2 servings or 2 cups.

Now look at the calories for one serving. Let's say it is 250 calories.

if you eat the whole package you will have eaten 500 calories!

2 serving X 250 calories = 500 calories.

Those calories really add up if you eat more than one serving. So always check the label so you can make a healthy decision.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size	1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container	2
Amount per serving	
Calories	250
Calories From Fat	110

Take a food label and practice!

Step 1: Look at the Servings Information:

How many servings on the package? _____

What is the serving size? _____

If you ate the whole package, how many servings would you have eaten?

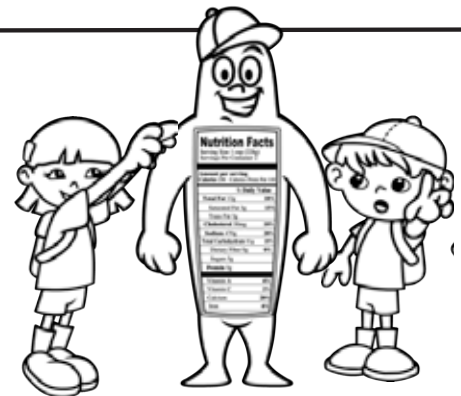
serving size _____ x number of servings in package _____ = _____

Step 2: Look at the Calorie Information:

What is the Calories for one serving? _____

If you ate the whole package, how many calories would you have eaten?

calories _____ x number of servings in package _____ = _____ total calories



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Day 3

Fat: This number tells us how many calories in one serving of food will come from fat. This includes Saturated Fat and Trans Fats.

Saturated Fat and Trans Fats are considered 'Bad Fat' because they can increase a person's risk for developing heart disease.

Unsaturated Fat is often called 'Good Fats' as they do not raise a person's blood cholesterol levels like Saturated Fats and Trans Fats.

For many of us 30% of all the calories we eat in a day should come from fat. So if you eat 2,000 calories per day, about 600 of these calories should come from fat.

Cholesterol:

Cholesterol is important in the production of vitamin D and some hormones in our body needs. The liver manufactures most of the cholesterol we need, but cholesterol is also found in the foods that we eat.

Blood cholesterol comes in two major types: HDL (the "good" kind) and LDL (the "bad" kind). Too much LDL cholesterol in a person's blood increases the risk of heart disease. It is important to know how much cholesterol, along with saturated and trans fats, we eat as it tends to raise levels of LDL cholesterol in the blood.

Sodium:

Sodium is a component of salt. Small amounts of sodium keep proper body fluid balance. Sodium is added to foods because it adds flavor and helps preserve food. Fresh food have less sodium as compared to processed, packaged, and canned foods.

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Day 4

Total Carbohydrates

This amount covers all carbohydrates, including fiber and sugar. The best sources of carbohydrates are fruits and vegetables, along with whole-grain foods like cereals, breads, pasta, and brown rice. Most of your daily calorie intake should come from carbohydrates.

Sugars are listed separately under Total Carbohydrates. The foods that are high in sugar content also are high in calories. Soda, candy, juices, and many snack foods are high in added sugar are considered “empty calories” because they usually don’t offer a lot of other nutrients.

Fiber

Fiber is not digested and helps keep our digestive system healthy. Fiber has no calories and it can help you feel full. Fiber can also help reduce our blood cholesterol levels. The food that we eat should have at least 3 grams of fiber per serving.

Protein

Most of the body including muscles and skin is made up of protein. If the body doesn’t get enough fat and carbohydrates, it can use protein for energy. So be sure the foods you eat give you some protein.

Vitamins and Minerals

We must eat foods that are high in a variety of vitamins and minerals. The food label gives us information about vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. Sometimes other important vitamins and minerals are also listed on the label, especially if that product has significant amounts of those vitamins and minerals per serving.



Understanding and Using the Nutrition Facts Label



The **Nutrition Facts** label found on packaged foods and beverages is your **daily tool** for making informed food choices that contribute to healthy lifelong healthy eating habits.

Nutrition Facts	
4 servings per container	
Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)	
Amount per serving	
Calories	240
<small>% Daily Value*</small>	
Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 430mg	19%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	17%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* 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.

Servings Per Container shows the **total number of servings** in the entire food package or container. One package of food may contain more than one serving.

Serving Size is based on the **amount of food that is customarily eaten at one time** and is not a recommendation of how much to eat. The nutrition information listed on the label is usually based on one serving of the food; however, some containers may also have information displayed per package.

Calories refer to the **total number of calories** in a serving of the food. To achieve or maintain a healthy body weight, balance the number of calories you eat and drink with the number of calories your body uses. 2,000 calories a day is used as a general guide for nutrition advice. Learn your number at www.choosemyplate.gov/resources/MyPlatePlan.

As a general guide:

- **100 calories** per serving of an individual packaged food is considered **moderate**
- **400 calories** or more per serving of an individual packaged food is considered **high**

Nutrients to get less of: saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars. Compare and choose foods to get less than 100% DV of these nutrients each day.

Nutrients to get more of: dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium. Compare and choose foods to get 100% DV of these nutrients on most days.

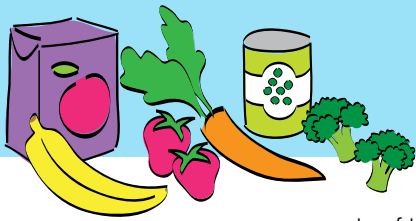
% Daily Value (%DV) shows **how much of a nutrient in a serving of the food contributes to a total daily diet.** Use %DV to determine if a serving of the food is high or low in an individual nutrient and to compare food products (remember to make sure the serving size is the same).

As a general guide:

- **5% DV** or less of a nutrient per serving is considered **low**
- **20% DV** or more of a nutrient per serving is considered **high**

Nutrients

The Nutrition Facts label can help you **learn about, compare, and monitor the nutrients** in many foods in your diet.



Action Steps For a Healthy Diet



Use the Nutrition Facts label and other parts of the food label to help you make healthy food choices.

- **Eat a variety of colorful vegetables** (fresh, frozen, canned, and dried) and 100% vegetable juices. Buy frozen (without butter or sauce) and low sodium or no-salt-added canned vegetables. Try vegetables as snacks, salads, side dishes, and as part of main dishes.
- **Focus on whole fruits** (fresh, frozen, dried, and canned in 100% fruit juice). Try fruits as snacks and desserts and add fruits to salads and side dishes. Use fruit to top foods like cereal, pancakes, and yogurt instead of other sweet toppings.
- **Make at least half your grains whole grains.** Look for foods with a whole grain listed as the first or second grain ingredient after water. Try whole grains (such as brown rice, couscous, and quinoa) as side dishes and switch from refined to whole grain versions of commonly consumed foods (such as breads, cereals, pasta, and rice). Limit refined grains and products made with refined grains, especially those high in calories, saturated fat, added sugars, and/or sodium (such as cakes, cookies, chips, and crackers).
- **Vary your protein routine.** Try beans and peas, fat-free or 1% low-fat dairy products, eggs, lean meats and poultry, seafood, soy products, nuts, and seeds. Choose seafood and plant sources of protein (such as soy products, beans, peas, and unsalted nuts and seeds) in place of some meats and poultry. Add beans or peas to salads, soups, and side dishes—or serve them as a main dish. Try a small handful of unsalted nuts or seeds as snacks.
- **Substitute fat-free or 1% low-fat dairy products** (such as milk, cheese, and yogurt) and fortified plant-based beverages (such as soy, rice, and almond) for whole and 2% reduced-fat dairy products. Limit dairy desserts that are high in calories, saturated fat, and added sugars (such as ice cream, other frozen desserts, and puddings).

- **Limit saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars.** Choose fresh meats, poultry, and seafood, rather than processed. Switch from stick margarine to soft margarine (liquid, spray, or tub). Look for light, low sodium, reduced sodium, or no-salt-added versions of packaged foods, snacks, and condiments. Limit baked goods, desserts, sweets, and snack foods (such as cakes, cookies, ice cream, chocolate candies, chips, and microwave popcorn). Consume smaller portions of foods and beverages that are higher in saturated fat, sodium, and/or added sugars, or consume them less often.

Helpful Meal Preparation Tips

- Try baking, broiling, grilling, or steaming. These cooking methods do not add extra calories.
- Trim or drain fat from meats before or after cooking and remove poultry skin before eating.
- Cook and bake with liquid oils (such as canola and olive oil) instead of solid fats (such as butter and shortening).
- Prepare your own food when you can and limit packaged sauces and flavored products (such as rice and pasta mixes).
- Limit the amount of salt and sugar you add when cooking, baking, or eating.
- Flavor foods with herbs and spices and no-salt seasoning instead of salt.
- Rinse sodium-containing canned foods, such as tuna, vegetables, and beans before eating.
- When eating out, ask how your food is being prepared. You can also ask if nutrition information is available to help you make informed choices.

Nutrition Facts

servings per container

Serving size

Amount per serving

Calories

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat g	%
Saturated Fat g	%
<i>Trans</i> Fat g	
Cholesterol mg	%
Sodium mg	%
Total Carbohydrate g	%
Dietary Fiber g	%
Total Sugars g	
Includes g Added Sugars	%
Protein g	
Vitamin D mcg	%
Calcium mg	%
Iron mg	%
Potassium mg	%

* 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.

1st Activity:
Try It Yourself

Find the nutrition label of your favorite snack to fill out the nutrition label.

2nd Activity:
Food Label Fun

**This one has the directions with it.