

Get the Facts!

Steps to Reading and Understanding Nutrition Facts Labels

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You can make quick, informed decisions about foods by following these steps to reading Nutrition Facts labels on food packages.

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

Look at the serving size and number of servings in the package.
Tip: Ask yourself, "How many servings am I eating?"

Look at the number of calories in one serving.
 All the rest of the information on the label is based on one serving.
Question: Looking at the nutrition label, how many calories would you get from consuming two servings of this food?
 A. 470 B. 110 C. 250 D. 500
Answer: D. Eating two servings of this product would provide you with 500 calories.

Compare the amount of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium to the total amount recommended (see information at the bottom of label or % Daily Value). Try to minimize trans fat in your diet.
 Eating too much of these may increase your risk of developing chronic diseases. Eating too much saturated fat and/or trans fat, for example, may increase your risk of heart disease.

Check the amounts of dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. Getting enough of these nutrients in your diet may lower your chances of developing some diseases/conditions. For instance, getting enough calcium may help lower your risk of developing osteoporosis, a condition of weakened, fragile bones.

Check out the % Daily Value. Food labels list percentages of the recommended daily intakes of several nutrients. The numbers are based on a 2,000-calorie diet and are used for adults who are 18 years or older. If you consume more or less than 2,000 calories per day, you still can use % Daily Values as a reference.

Quick tips:

- Aim to eat less than the % Daily Value for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.
 - For example, the recommended daily value for cholesterol is 300 milligrams, which would be 100 percent of the daily value. Try to eat less than 300 milligrams of cholesterol per day.
- Eat foods that are higher in % Daily Value for vitamins, minerals and fiber.

Use this reference guide for evaluating a product's % Daily Value:

- “Low” = 5% or less of the Daily Value
- “High” = 20% or more of the Daily Value

Question: Which of the following does/do not have a % Daily Value?

- A. Trans fat B. Sugars C. Protein D. All of these

Answer: D

Sugars have no daily reference value because no recommendations have been made for the total amount of sugars to eat in a day.

Protein needs are more individualized and should be based on an individual's weight and physical activity.

Experts could not provide a reference value for trans fat nor any other information that the Food and Drug Administration believes is sufficient to establish a Daily Value or % Daily Value.

Label A

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (245g)	
Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 80	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 105mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 12g	4%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 12g	
Protein 8g	
Vitamin A 10%	• Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 30%	• Iron 0%
* 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	

Label B

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (244g)	
Servings Per Container	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 120	Calories from Fat 45
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 5g	8%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 20mg	7%
Sodium 100mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 11g	4%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 11g	
Protein 8g	
Vitamin A 10%	• Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 30%	• Iron 0%
* 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	

Compare Labels

Question: Which of the following labels is reduced-fat milk and which is nonfat milk? Which has more saturated fat and cholesterol? Which has more calcium and vitamin A?

Answer: Label A is nonfat milk and Label B is reduced-fat milk. Reduced-fat milk has more saturated fat and cholesterol. Both nonfat milk and reduced-fat milk contain the same amounts of calcium and vitamin A.

Reference

“How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label.” Food and Drug Administration. www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html

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