



Unlocking the Mystery



of the



NUTRITION FACTS LABEL!



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How many times have you gone to the grocery store and tried to read the Nutrition Facts label looking for a healthy option only to be confused by the information listed? Maybe you've tried to read the ingredient list only to be confused by the names of the ingredients.

Do you really know what all this information is telling you? Continue reading below to learn which information on the Nutrition Facts label is the most important to consider when buying foods. Then read about the ingredient lists at the end to learn how to find the healthier food options when shopping at the store.

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

You can use the Nutrition Facts label not only to help *limit* those nutrients you want to cut back on but also to *increase* those nutrients you need to consume in greater amounts.

Label retrieved from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services – Food and Drug Administration. How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label on 12/2/09.
<http://www.fda.gov/Food/LabelingNutrition/ConsumerInformation/ucm078889.htm>

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	

Serving Size
The numbers on the label are based on eating this amount of the product.

Servings Per Container
The number of servings in the whole package. In the above example, there are 2 servings per container or 2 cups in the package. If you eat the whole package, you have to multiply the numbers on the label by this number to find out how many calories, grams of fat, etc. that you ate.

Calories

The amount of calories in one serving of the product. In this example, there are 250 calories in 1 cup of the product.

Calories from Fat

The amount of calories that come from the fat present in the food. This gives you a general idea of the percentage of calories coming from fat.

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110

The nutrients listed in yellow should be limited as much as possible. Most Americans eat too much fat, cholesterol, and sodium. Eating too much of these nutrients can negatively impact your health by increasing your risk for heart disease, cancer, and other diseases.

Look for foods that are low in total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium.

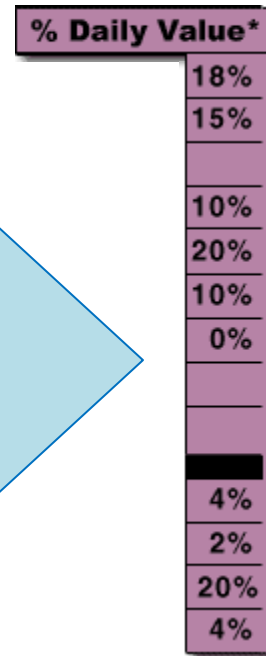
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%

Most Americans do not get enough of the nutrients highlighted in blue. To improve health and reduce your risk of developing certain diseases, be sure to eat plenty of these nutrients. When reading nutrition labels, be sure to look at the values for these nutrients to find the most nutritious option.

Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

The % Daily Value numbers are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. These numbers show you how much what you're eating contributes to your daily nutrient needs. For example, the top number (18%) relates to the Total Fat in the product, which is 12 grams. Therefore, if you eat 2,000 calories per day, 12 grams of fat is 18% of your total fat needs for the entire day.

Use these percentages to help you find the healthiest foods. You want to look for foods with a % Daily Value of 20% or higher for the nutrients like fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron. Nutrients like fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium should have a % Daily Value of 5% or below.



* 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

You might see this at the bottom and wonder what it is. It basically tells you that the Percent Daily Values on the label are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. This means that the percentages are accurate for someone who eats approximately 2,000 calories a day. If you eat 1,800 calories a day, then the % Daily Value will be slightly more than what the label says. If you eat 2,500 calories, then the % Daily Values would be less than what you need.

The information in this box is the same regardless of the product you buy. It simply tells you the recommended dietary advice for all Americans.

Ingredient Lists

Another way to find healthy foods is by reading the Ingredient List. Ingredients are listed by weight. The main ingredient, or the one that weighs the most in the product, will be listed first. For example, in canned chicken noodle soup, the first ingredient is chicken stock. The other ingredients (in order by weight) include enriched egg noodles, cooked chicken meat, water, and the spices and seasonings.

One thing to look for when shopping for breads, cereal, or other grain products is to make sure that they are made with whole grains. Many people think that they are buying whole wheat bread when the packaging only says “Wheat Bread”, which is not a whole grain. To be a whole grain product, the first ingredient on the ingredient list should say “whole wheat flour” or “whole grain”. As long as the word “whole” appears before the grain name, it should be a whole grain product.

Many companies are now listing allergenic foods on their labels. This is especially good for those suffering from food allergies. The most common allergenic foods, like peanuts, soy, eggs, wheat, milk, and nuts are listed in bold type if they are an ingredient in the food. They may also be listed if the food was prepared in a factory that also processes the allergenic foods.

For those of you concerned with hidden sugar in food, here is a list of alternate names for sugar. Look for these in the Ingredient List.

Corn Syrup	Confectioner's Sugar
High Fructose Corn Syrup	Powdered Sugar
Table Sugar	Turbinado
Brown Sugar	Maple Syrup
Molasses	Sugar Cane Syrup
Honey	Dextrose
Beet Sugar	Sucrose
Fruit Juice Concentrate	Maltose
Cane Sugar	Glucose