

Understanding Food Labels

What can I use the Nutrition Facts label for?

- ▶ Getting a general idea about what's in a food (i.e. how nutritious a food is).
- ▶ Figuring out what counts as one serving and how many calories are in each serving.
- ▶ Comparing two similar products to choose the healthiest option.

1 START HERE
Start by checking what counts as one serving size and how many servings there are per package.

2 CHECK CALORIES:
How many calories would you eat if you ate a whole package?
Multiply the number of "servings per container" by the "calories".

3 LIMIT THESE NUTRIENTS
Aim to eat only small amounts of saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. Keep *transfat* to 0.

4 GET ENOUGH OF THESE NUTRIENTS
Aim to get enough fiber, vitamins and minerals.

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%

5 QUICK GUIDE TO % DAILY VALUE
·5% or less is Low
·20% or more is High.
Use the % Daily Value to compare similar foods and choose the healthiest option.

Watch out for these common misconceptions:

- ▶ Assuming sugar-free or fat-free means calorie-free; it's not true!
- ▶ Buying something because it says "organic", "natural", "multigrain" or has some other "healthy" claim. These statements do not mean a product is good for you!
- ▶ Assuming that because a package looks like it should only be one serving it actually is. Many beverage bottles and packages of chips, cookies and candy are actually 2 or 3 servings!

Reference

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration. (2000). *How to understand and use the nutrition facts label*. Retrieved from [http://www.fda.gov/Food/](http://www.fda.gov/Food/IngredientsPackagingLabeling/LabelingNutrition/ucm274593.htm#twoparts)

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