Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics

Shop Smart— Get the Facts on the New Food Labels

Become a smart shopper by reading food labels to find out more about the foods you eat. The Nutrition Facts panel found on most food labels will be changing in the near future, and the updates will help you:

- Find out which foods are good sources of dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium
- Compare similar foods to find out which one is lower in calories
- Look for foods that are lower in saturated fat, *trans* fat, sodium, and added sugars

Start with the Servings Per Container and Serving Size

- Look here for both the number of servings in the package and the serving size (the amount for one serving).
- Remember to check your portion size to the serving size listed on the label. If the label serving size is one cup, and you eat two cups, you are getting twice the calories, fat and other nutrients listed on the label.

Check Out the Total Calories

- Find out how many calories are in a single serving

Let the Percent Daily Values Be Your Guide

Use percent Daily Values (DV) to help you evaluate how a particular food fits into your daily eating plan:

Current Label:

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g)
Servings Per Container About 8

Amount Per Serving

Calories 230	Calories from Fat 72
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	**12%**
Saturated Fat 1g	**5%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 160mg	**7%**
Total Carbohydrate 37g	**12%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**16%**
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	8%
Calcium	20%
Iron	45%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily value 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

New Label:

Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container
Serving size **2/3 cup (55g)**

Amount per serving
Calories **230**

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 8g	**10%**
Saturated Fat 1g	**5%**
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	**0%**
Sodium 160mg	**7%**
Total Carbohydrate 37g	**13%**
Dietary Fiber 4g	**14%**
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	**20%**
Protein 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	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.

Source: FDA.gov, *FOR REFERENCE ONLY*

- Daily Values are average levels of nutrients for a person eating 2,000 calories a day.
- Remember: percent DV are for the entire day—not just for one meal or snack.
- You may need more or less than 2,000 calories per day. For some nutrients you may need more or less than 100% DV.
- 5 percent or less is low — try to aim low in saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol, and sodium
- 20 percent or more is high— try to aim high in vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber

For more food label information, visit the Food and Drug Administration at
www.fda.gov/Food/ ResourcesForYou/Consumers

Limit Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, Sodium, and Added Sugars

Eating less of these may help reduce your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure and cancer:

- Limit saturated fats to less than 10% of total calories daily by replacing them with unsaturated fats
- Limit *trans* fats to as low as possible.
- Limit sodium to less than 2,300 mg daily (for adults and children 14 years and older).
- Limit added sugar to less than 10% of total calories daily

Get Enough Vitamins, Minerals and Fiber

- Eat more dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, and potassium to maintain good health and help reduce your risk of certain health problems such as osteoporosis.
- Remember to aim high for % DV of these nutrients.

Additional Nutrients

- Carbohydrates — There are three types of carbohydrates: sugars, starches and fiber. Select whole-grain breads, cereals, rice and pasta plus fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk and yogurt.
- Proteins—Aim for a variety, including seafood, poultry, lean meats, eggs, beans and peas, nuts, seeds, and soy products.

Check the Ingredient List

Foods with more than one ingredient must have an ingredient list on the label. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Those in the largest amounts are listed first. Food manufacturers are required to state if food products contain any ingredients that are derived from the eight major allergenic foods: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and soybeans.

What Health Claims on Food Labels Really Mean

FDA has strict guidelines on how certain food label terms can be used. FDA also sets standards for health-related claims on food labels to help consumers identify foods that are rich in nutrients and may help to reduce the risk for certain diseases. For example, health claims may highlight the link between calcium and osteoporosis, dietary fiber and some cancers, saturated fat and heart disease or high blood pressure and sodium.

Some of the most common claims seen on food packages:

- **Low calorie**—Less than 40 calories per serving.
- **Low cholesterol** —20 mg or less of cholesterol and 2 gm or less of saturated fat per serving.
- **Reduced**—25% less of the specified nutrient or calories than the usual product.
- **Good source of** — Provides at least 10% of the DV of a particular nutrient per serving.
- **Calorie free**—Less than 5 calories per serving.
- **Fat free / sugar free** — Less than ½ gram of fat or sugar per serving.
- **Low sodium**—140 mg or less of sodium per serving.
- **High in (or Excellent source of)**—Provides 20% or more of the DV of a specified nutrient per serving.

For a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist and for additional food and nutrition information visit www.eatright.org.

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving the health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

This tip sheet is provided by:

www.DreadmillPhil.com

@DreadmillPhil
(Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)

DreadmillPhil@Gmail.com

Sources: US Food and Drug Administration, ADA Complete Food & Nutrition Guide

Authored by Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics staff registered dietitian nutritionists.

©2017 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Reproduction of this tip sheet is permitted for educational purposes. Reproduction for sales purposes is not authorized.