



## Chapter # 15

# Nutrition: Reading Food Labels

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Learn how to quickly understand information on food labels and choose heart healthy foods

### You Will Learn:

- 1) About the different types of nutrition information on the label:  
**Ingredient List, Nutrition Facts Panel, Nutrient Claims**
- 2) How to use the **Nutrition Facts Panel** to choose heart healthy foods
- 3) How to use **% Daily Value** to see if there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in one serving of a packaged food

# Look At the Label

## Three Places To Get Information

### 1) List of Ingredients

All ingredients in the food are listed in descending order by weight. This means that foods contain more of the ingredients at the beginning of the list, and less of the ingredients at the end of the list. The ingredient list can help you look for specific ingredients and help you avoid those that you don't want to consume.

The following is an example of a food that has a lot of sugar.

**INGREDIENTS:** GLUCOSE-FRUCTOSE, CHICORY ROOT EXTRACT (INSULIN FIBRE), SUGAR, WHOLE GRAIN ROLLED OATS, PUFFED WHEAT, HIGH MALTOSE CORN SYRUP, WHOLE GRAIN BARLEY FLAKES, CHOCOLATE CHIPS (CHOCOLATE LIQUOR, SUGAR, COCOA BUTTER, MILK INGREDIENT, SOY LECITHIN, NATURAL FLAVOUR), CORN BRAN, PALM KERNAL OIL, CRISP RICE (RICE FLOUR, MALT EXTRACT, SUGAR, SALT), CANOLA OIL, WHEAT BRAN, GLYCERIN, COCOA, WHOLE GRAIN WHEAT, GRAHAM FLOUR, SOY LECITHIN, CORN STARCH, NATURAL FLAVOUR, MALTODEXTRIN, SALT, TRISODIUM PHOSPHATE, BHT.

## 2) Nutrition Facts

These facts give you information about the amount of calories, fats, protein, carbohydrates and other nutrients in the food.

# Take 5 to read the facts

Got 5 minutes? Follow these 5 easy steps to read the Nutrition Facts table.

### 1 Serving size

If you eat the serving size shown on the Nutrition Facts table, you will get the amount of Calories and nutrients that are listed. Always compare the serving size on the package to the amount that you eat.

### 2 Calories

Calories tell you how much energy you get from one serving of a packaged food.

### 3 Percent Daily Value (% Daily Value)

% Daily Value puts nutrients on a scale from 0% to 100%. This scale tells you if there is a *little* or a *lot* of a nutrient in one serving of a packaged food.

### 4 Get less of these nutrients:

- Fat, saturated fat and trans fat
- Cholesterol
- Sodium

Choose packaged foods with a *low* % Daily Value of fat and sodium, especially if you are at risk for heart disease or diabetes.



### 5 Get more of these nutrients:

- Fibre
- Vitamin A and Vitamin C
- Calcium
- Iron

Choose packaged foods with a *high* % Daily Value of these nutrients. If you have diabetes, watch how much carbohydrate you eat as this will affect your blood glucose levels.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (55 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories</b> 220	
<b>Fat</b> 2 g	<b>3 %</b>
Saturated 0 g	
+ Trans 0 g	<b>0 %</b>
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0 mg	
<b>Sodium</b> 270 mg	<b>11 %</b>
<b>Carbohydrate</b> 44 g	<b>15 %</b>
Fibre 8 g	<b>32 %</b>
Sugars 16 g	
<b>Protein</b> 6 g	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 4 %	Iron 40 %



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Fact Sheet #3

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### 3) Nutrition Claims

These tell you how diet can affect your health or give you information about a nutrient e.g., low fat.



Examples of nutrition claims	What it means	Where you might see this claim	BEWARE!
Cholesterol free No cholesterol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An insignificant amount</li> </ul>	Potato chips	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cholesterol only comes from animals</li> <li>Cholesterol free products may still be high in fat</li> </ul>
Low fat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Indicates a very small amount</li> <li>Low fat (3 grams of fat or less/ serving)</li> </ul>	Fruit bottom yogurt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low fat does not always mean low in calories</li> <li>Choose fat free yogurt with no sugar</li> </ul>
No sugar added	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Granulated sugar has not been added to the product</li> </ul>	Juice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Juices are high in calories and have <i>natural</i> sugar</li> </ul>
Light	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used in foods that are reduced in fat or calories (energy)</li> </ul>	Light peanut butter	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can also refer to colour or texture e.g., "light" or "lite" olive oil</li> </ul>



# Using the Nutrition Facts Table: % Daily Value

## How to CHOOSE

The Nutrition Facts table gives you information on calories and 13 core nutrients. Use the amount of food and the % Daily Value (% DV) to choose healthier food products.

Follow these three steps:

**1 LOOK at the amount of food**  
 Nutrition Facts are based on a specific amount of food (also known as the serving size). Compare this to the amount you actually eat.

**2 READ the % DV**  
 The % DV helps you see if a specific amount of food has a little or a lot of a nutrient.

5% DV or less is a **LITTLE**  
 15% DV or more is a **LOT** } This applies to all nutrients.

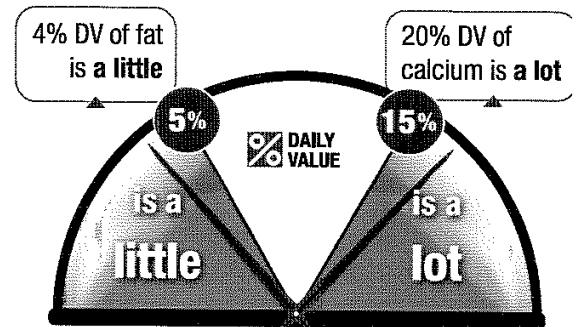
**3 CHOOSE**  
 Make a better choice for you. Here are some nutrients you may want...

- |                            |                |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| <b>less of</b>             | <b>more of</b> |
| • Fat                      | • Fibre        |
| • Saturated and trans fats | • Vitamin A    |
| • Sodium                   | • Calcium      |
|                            | • Iron         |

**Here is an example of how to choose:**  
 You are at the grocery store looking at yogurt. The small container (175 g) of yogurt you pick has a **little** fat (4% DV) and a **lot** of calcium (20% DV) – this is a better choice if you are trying to eat less fat and more calcium as part of a healthy lifestyle!

Yogurt

Nutrition Facts	
Per 3/4 cup (175 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories</b> 160	
<b>Fat</b> 2.5 g	4 %
Saturated 1.5 g	8 %
+ Trans 0 g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 10 mg	
<b>Sodium</b> 75 mg	3 %
<b>Carbohydrate</b> 25 g	8 %
Fibre 0 g	0 %
Sugars 24 g	
<b>Protein</b> 8 g	
Vitamin A 2 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 20 %	Iron 0 %



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 Également disponible en français sous le titre : Utilisez le tableau de la valeur nutritive : % de la valeur quotidienne.  
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## How to COMPARE

Use the amount of food and the % Daily Value (% DV) to compare and choose healthier food products.

Follow these three steps:

### 1 LOOK at the amounts of food

Compare the amounts of food (also known as the serving sizes) in the Nutrition Facts tables.

**Cracker A** has 9 crackers and weighs 23 grams.

**Cracker B** has 4 crackers and weighs 20 grams.

Because the weights are similar, you can compare these Nutrition Facts tables.

### 2 READ the % DVs

Since you are comparing crackers, you may want to look at the % DVs for saturated and trans fats, sodium and fibre.

**Cracker A** has 13% DV for saturated and trans fats, 12% DV for sodium and 4% DV for fibre.

**Cracker B** has 2% DV for saturated and trans fats, 4% DV for sodium and 12% DV for fibre.

**Remember: 5% DV or less is a little and 15% DV or more is a lot.** This applies to all nutrients.

### 3 CHOOSE

In this case, **Cracker B** would be a better choice if you are trying to eat less saturated and trans fats, less sodium and more fibre as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Use the Nutrition Facts table and *Eating Well with Canada's Food Guide* to make healthier food choices.

 **DAILY VALUE** [healthycanadians.gc.ca/dailyvalue](http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/dailyvalue)

Cracker A

Nutrition Facts	
Per 9 crackers (23 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories 90</b>	
<b>Fat 4.5 g</b>	<b>7 %</b>
Saturated 2.5 g + Trans 0 g	<b>13 %</b>
<b>Cholesterol 0 mg</b>	
<b>Sodium 280 mg</b>	<b>12 %</b>
<b>Carbohydrate 12 g</b>	<b>4 %</b>
Fibre 1 g	<b>4 %</b>
Sugars 0 g	
<b>Protein 3 g</b>	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 2 %	Iron 8 %

Cracker B

Nutrition Facts	
Per 4 crackers (20 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories 90</b>	
<b>Fat 2 g</b>	<b>3 %</b>
Saturated 0.3 g + Trans 0 g	<b>2 %</b>
<b>Cholesterol 0 mg</b>	
<b>Sodium 90 mg</b>	<b>4 %</b>
<b>Carbohydrate 15 g</b>	<b>5 %</b>
Fibre 3 g	<b>12 %</b>
Sugars 1 g	
<b>Protein 2 g</b>	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 2 %	Iron 8 %

#### Did you know?

You may be able to compare products that don't have similar amounts of food.

For example, you could compare the % DVs of a bagel (90 g) to the % DVs of 2 slices of bread (70 g) because you would most likely eat either amount of food at one meal.



# Serving up nutrition facts

## Why is the serving size on packaged foods important?

The serving size tells you how much food you need to eat to get the amount of Calories and nutrients shown on the Nutrition Facts table.

### How is the serving size shown on the Nutrition Facts table?

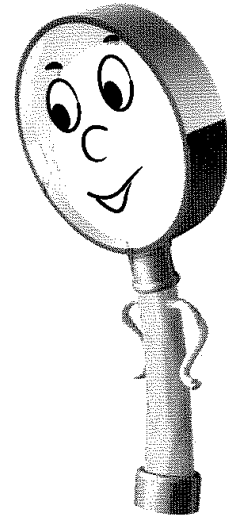
There are two types of information that tell you about the serving size:

- **Household measurements**  
Look for familiar words like *cup* and *pieces*.
- **Metric measurements**  
Look for metric measurements like *mL* (*millilitres*) and *g* (*grams*).

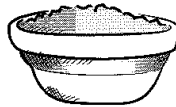
### What if you eat less? What if you eat more?

If you eat *less* than the serving size shown on the Nutrition Facts table you will get *less* of the Calories and nutrients listed. If you eat *more* than the serving size shown, you will get *more* of the Calories and nutrients listed.

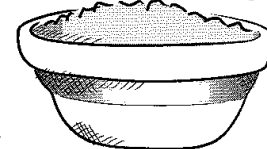
In this example, if you eat a double serving of this cereal, you will get double the Calories and double of all the nutrients, such as fibre.



Single serving

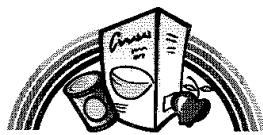


Double serving



Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (55 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
<b>Calories 220</b>	
<b>Fat 2 g</b>	3 %
Saturated 0 g + Trans 0 g	0 %
<b>Cholesterol 0 mg</b>	
<b>Sodium 270 mg</b>	11 %
<b>Carbohydrate 44 g</b>	15 %
Fibre 8 g	32 %
Sugars 16 g	
<b>Protein 6 g</b>	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 4 %	Iron 40 %

Nutrition Facts	
Per 2 cups (110 g)	
<b>Calories 440</b>	
	64 %



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# All about nutrients

## Why are the nutrients on the Nutrition Facts table important for your health?

### Fat

Fat provides energy and nutrients for your body. However, if you eat *too much* fat or *too much of certain kinds* of fat, such as saturated fat and trans fat, you could develop heart disease or type 2 diabetes.

### Cholesterol

Your body makes *most* of its own cholesterol, but also gets *some* cholesterol from foods that you eat. Cholesterol builds the cells and hormones in your body. Too much cholesterol in your blood can lead to heart attacks or strokes.

### Sodium

Sodium is another name for salt. Salt helps to balance the fluids in your body, but for some people, eating *too much* salt may be harmful.

### Carbohydrate

Carbohydrate provides energy for your muscles and your brain. Sugar and fibre are two types of carbohydrate shown on the Nutrition Facts table.

If you have diabetes, you can help control your blood glucose by:

- Dividing carbohydrate evenly into meals and snacks throughout the day
- Eating foods high in fibre

### Protein

Protein builds your muscles, bones and teeth.

### Vitamins

Vitamin A keeps your skin and eyesight healthy. Vitamin C helps your body fight infections.

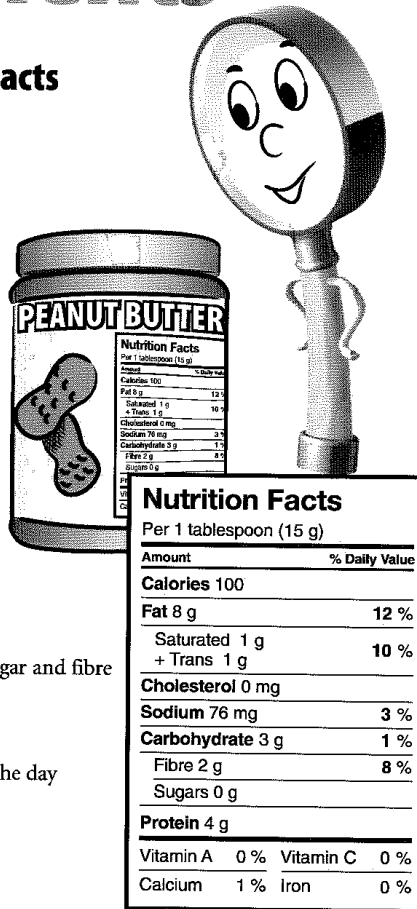
### Minerals

Calcium gives you strong bones and teeth and may prevent osteoporosis. Iron helps your red blood cells carry oxygen throughout your body.

**Eat a variety of foods to get the nutrients your body needs.**



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## Your Resources

- 1) Call 1-877-510-5102 to talk to a Registered Dietitian for free or visit: [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)
- 2) Health Canada (Food Guide, Label Reading): [www.healthy Canadians.gc.ca](http://www.healthy Canadians.gc.ca)