

Cardiovascular Prevention & Rehabilitation

How to Read Food Labels



After reading through this presentation, you will be able to identify:

1. Parts of a food label:
ingredients list, serving size
and percent daily value
2. What is considered a low and
a high percent daily value



Read food labels at the store

Why is this information important to me?



Our research shows that most people find reading labels difficult. However, engaging in label reading education can lead to more confidence in reading labels and making healthier food choices.

Parts of a food label

You can find nutrition information in 3 different places on packaged foods. All packaged foods will have a nutrition facts table and an ingredients list. Nutrition or health claims are optional, so you won't always see them on a package.

1. Nutrition facts table

Nutrition Facts		
Per 1 cup (55 g)		
Amount	Cereal	With 1/2 cup skim milk
Calories	200	240
% Daily Value		
Fat 1 g*	2 %	2 %
Saturated 0.2 g + Trans 0 g	1 %	2 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	0 %	1 %
Sodium 200 mg	8 %	11 %
Carbohydrate 45 g	15 %	17 %
Fibre 6 g	24 %	24 %
Sugars 9 g		
Protein 6 g		
Vitamin A	0 %	8 %
Vitamin C	0 %	0 %
Calcium	2 %	15 %
Iron	50 %	50 %

Parts of a food label

Ingredients

whole grain wheat, sugar, salt, barley, malt extract

Vitamins & Minerals

thiamine mononitrate (B1), niacinamide, pyridoxine hydrochloride (B6), calcium, pantothenate, folic acid, iron

Contains wheat & barley.

2. Ingredient list



3. Nutrition or health claim

List of ingredients: in order from most to least

Ingredients

whole grain wheat, sugar, salt, barley, malt extract

Vitamins & Minerals

thiamine mononitrate (B1), niacinamide, pyridoxine hydrochloride (B6), calcium, pantothenate, folic acid, iron

Contains wheat & barley.

You will find the ingredients list on the back or side of a package. It lists all of the ingredients used to make the food. It's important to know that the ingredients are listed in order from most to least based on their weight. This means that the first ingredient on the list is found in the highest amount, and the last ingredient on the list is found in the smallest amount.

When you read an ingredients list, look where sugar, salt, or oils are listed. A heart healthy diet limits sugar, salt, and oils, so try to find foods that have these ingredients at the end of the ingredients list.

If you are buying grain products like breads or cereals, try to choose foods that have the words whole grain as the first ingredient on the list.

List of ingredients: how sugar is noted

Ingredients: Sugars (fancy molasses, brown sugar, sugar) • Wheat flour • Vegetable oil shortening (soybean and/or canola and modified palm oil) • Liquid whole egg • Salt • Sodium bicarbonate • Spices • Allura red
Contains: Wheat • Egg • Soy

One of the biggest changes to the new labels is how ingredients will be listed. In red boxes you can see different names for sugar, such as fancy molasses, or brown sugar. The new labels will make it easy to identify sources of sugar, because all of the sugars will be grouped together.

Nutrition facts

Quinoa and Flax Bread

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (70 g)	
Calories 190	% Daily Value*
Fat 5 g	7 %
Saturated 0.5 g	7 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 29 g	
Fibre 5 g	18 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 7 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 161 mg	9 %
Potassium 175 mg	4 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron 2.25 mg	13 %
*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot	

The nutrition facts table tells us about the nutrients that are in a food. It must include a serving size, calories, and a percent daily value. It must also give information about 13 key nutrients: these are: fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, carbohydrates, fibre, sugars, protein, vitamin A, vitamin C, Calcium, and Iron. All other nutrients that are listed are optional and up to the manufacturer.

Nutrition Facts — Serving size

Quinoa and Flax Bread

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (70 g)	
Calories 190	% Daily Value*
Fat 5 g	7 %
Saturated 0.5 g	7 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 29 g	
Fibre 5 g	18 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 7 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 161 mg	9 %
Potassium 175 mg	4 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron 2.25 mg	13 %
*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot	

When reading a food label it's important to start with the serving size first. This is because all of the information listed on the nutrition facts table is based on the serving size amount.

The serving size will be given in measures that you may be familiar with, such as 1 cup, 1 egg, 1 slice of bread.

It's important to look at serving sizes when you are comparing products because they may vary by different brands.

Nutrition Facts — Calories

Quinoa and Flax Bread

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (70 g)	
Calories 190	% Daily Value*
Fat 5 g	7 %
Saturated 0.5 g	7 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 29 g	
Fibre 5 g	18 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 7 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 161 mg	9 %
Potassium 175 mg	4 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron 2.25 mg	13 %

*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot

- Calories are a measure of energy
- Quality over quantity, don't only focus on the calories when reading a food label

Nutrition Facts — Fat

Quinoa and Flax Bread

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (70 g)	
Calories 190	% Daily Value*
Fat 5 g	7 %
Saturated 0.5 g	7 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 29 g	
Fibre 5 g	18 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 7 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 161 mg	9 %
Potassium 175 mg	4 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron 2.25 mg	13 %

*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot

- Fat = saturated + trans + unsaturated
- Food labels will breakdown total fat into Saturated and Trans Fats below. They may not always include unsaturated fats

Nutrition Facts — Sodium

Quinoa and Flax Bread

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (70 g)	
Calories 190	% Daily Value*
Fat 5 g	7 %
Saturated 0.5 g	7 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 29 g	
Fibre 5 g	18 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 7 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 161 mg	9 %
Potassium 175 mg	4 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron 2.25 mg	13 %

*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot

- We want to aim to have less than 2000 mg of sodium per day

Nutrition Facts — Carbohydrates

Quinoa and Flax Bread

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (70 g)	
Calories 190	% Daily Value*
Fat 5 g	7 %
Saturated 0.5 g	7 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 29 g	
Fibre 5 g	18 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 7 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 161 mg	9 %
Potassium 175 mg	4 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron 2.25 mg	13 %

*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot

- Carbohydrate = fibre + starch + sugar
- Food labels breakdown Carbohydrates into fibre and sugar and may not always include starch

Nutrition facts: percent daily value (%DV)

Quinoa and Flax Bread

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (70 g)	
Calories 190	% Daily Value*
Fat 5 g	7 %
Saturated 0.5 g	7 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 29 g	
Fibre 5 g	18 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 7 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 161 mg	9 %
Potassium 175 mg	4 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron 2.25 mg	13 %

*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot

- %DV tells you if there is a lot or a little amount of these nutrients in the serving size
- Based on a 2,000 calorie diet each day

Nutrition facts: percent daily value (%DV)

Quinoa and Flax Bread

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (70 g)	
Calories 190	% Daily Value*
Fat 5 g	7 %
Saturated 0.5 g	7 %
+ Trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate 29 g	
Fibre 5 g	18 %
Sugars 2 g	2 %
Protein 7 g	
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 161 mg	9 %
Potassium 175 mg	4 %
Calcium 30 mg	2 %
Iron 2.25 mg	13 %

*5% or less is a little, 15% or more is a lot

- Choose foods 15 % or higher in fibre, vitamins, and minerals
- 5 % or lower in saturated fat, sodium
- Currently there is no % daily value for sugar, but new labels will eventually include one. For now, be aware that sugar is something we want to limit in our diet.

Nutrition Facts: Sugar

% Daily Value*		% Daily Value*	
Calories 140 cal		Calcium 20 mg	2 %
Fat 3.5 g	5 %	Iron 0.75 mg	4 %
Saturates 0.5 g	5 %	Vitamin A	0 %
+ Trans 0.0 g		Vitamin C	0 %
Carbohydrate 25 g	0 %	Thiamine 0.075 mg	6 %
Sugars 14 g	14 %	Riboflavin 0.1 mg	8 %
Fiber 1 g	4 %	Selenium 3.0 µg	5 %
Protein 2 g			
Cholesterol 0 mg			
Sodium 110 mg	5 %		
Potassium 75 mg	2 %		

The recommended amount of added sugar for women is less than 6 tsp of sugar/day, and for men it's less than 9 tsp of sugar/day. Added sugar includes things like brown sugar, honey, molasses, jams, and fruit juices. However some foods like yogurt, have naturally occurring sugar in them. This would not be included in the daily limit of 6-9 tsp/day of added sugar.

Unfortunately most food labels don't distinguish between naturally occurring sugar such as lactose, and added sugars.

Learning activity: compare the amount of sodium



Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive		Amount / Teneur	% DV / % VQ *	Amount / Teneur	% DV / % VQ *	
Per 1/2 can (106 g) par 1/2 boîte (106 g)		Total Fat / Lipides	11 g	16 %	Cholest / Cholest.	60 mg
Calories 170		Saturated / saturés	2.5 g	13 %	Sodium / Sodium	85 mg
		+ Trans / trans	0 g		Potassium / Potassium	370 mg
		Polyunsat / Polyinsat.	3 g		Carb / Glucides	0 g
		Omega-6 / oméga-6	0.3 g		Fibre / Fibres	0 g
		Omega-3 / oméga-3	2.5 g		Sugars / Sucres	0 g
		Monounsat / monoinsat.	5 g		Protein / Protéines	18 g
* % Daily Value / % valeur quotidienne : Vit A 4 % • Vit C 0 % • Calcium 20 % • Iron / Fer 6 %						
INGREDIENTS: WILD RED SOCKEYE. INGRÉDIENTS : SOCKEYE ROUGE SAUVAGE.			CLOVER LEAF SEAFOODS MARKHAM, ONTARIO L3R 5B7 CANADA			



Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive		Amount / Teneur	% DV / % VQ *	Amount / Teneur	% DV / % VQ *	
Per 1/2 can (106 g) par 1/2 boîte (106 g)		Total Fat / Lipides	11 g	16 %	Cholest / Cholest.	60 mg
Calories 170		Saturated / saturés	2.5 g	13 %	Sodium / Sodium	440 mg
		+ Trans / trans	0 g		Carb / Glucides	0 g
		Polyunsat / Polyinsat.	3 g		Fibre / Fibres	0 g
		Omega-6 / oméga-6	0.3 g		Sugars / Sucres	0 g
		Omega-3 / oméga-3	2.5 g		Protein / Protéines	18 g
		Monounsat / monoinsat.	5 g			
* % Daily Value / % valeur quotidienne : Vit A 4 % • Vit C 0 % • Calcium 20 % • Iron / Fer 6 %						
INGREDIENTS: WILD RED SOCKEYE, SALT. INGRÉDIENTS : SOCKEYE SAUVAGE, SEL.			CLOVER LEAF SEAFOODS, L.P. MARKHAM, ONTARIO L3R 5B7 CANADA			

Nutrition claims

Fat free

Low fat

Light

No added sugar

Unsweetened

Cholesterol free

No cholesterol



There are many nutrition claims that you may see on products. Here are some examples of some claims you may see. . .

They must meet specific guidelines set out by Health Canada to be added on a food label. These claims can be helpful in choosing a product, but it's always important to look at the ingredients list and nutrition facts table.

Nutrition claims: example 'Extra Light'



Light can refer to colour/flavour - can have multiple meanings. In this case it is not referring to the fat content of this oil, but referring to the taste.

Nutrition claims: sodium and salt

‘25 % less salt’ may be misleading



NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION		
Per 125 mL Serving	Amount	% Daily Value
Calories	10	10
Fat	0 g	0%
Saturated Fat	0 g	0%
125 mL	0 g	0%
Cholesterol	0 mg	—
Sodium	670 mg	28%

The claim on this can of soup states that it has 25% less salt. But when we look at the nutrition facts table we can see that it actually contains more than 15% of the daily value for sodium, making this a high sodium food choice.

You can also look for the “no salt added” nutrition claim. This means there was no salt used in making the product. This can be a helpful claim to look for when you’re trying to choose low sodium foods.

High fibre claim

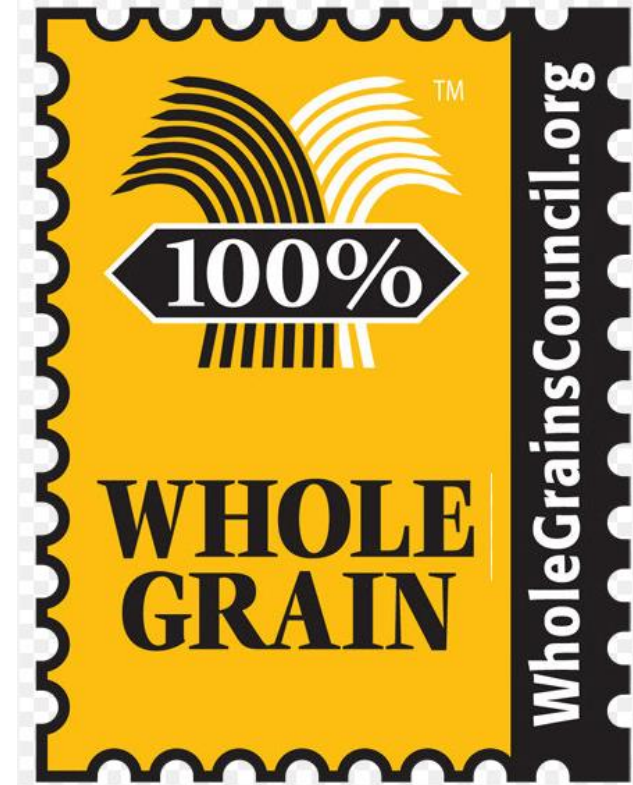
Nutrition Facts		
Per 1 cup (55 g)		
Amount	Cereal	With 1/2 cup skim milk
Calories	200	240
	% Daily Value	
Fat 1 g*	2 %	2 %
Saturated 0.2 g + Trans 0 g	1 %	2 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	0 %	1 %
Sodium 200 mg	8 %	11 %
Carbohydrate 45 g	15 %	17 %
Fibre 6 g	24 %	24 %
Sugars 9 g		
Protein 6 g		
Vitamin A	0 %	8 %
Vitamin C	0 %	0 %
Calcium	2 %	15 %
Iron	50 %	50 %

VERY HIGH
SOURCE
OF FIBRE

This claim can be used if a product contains 5 grams of fibre or more

Whole Grain Claim

Nutrition Facts		
Per 1 cup (55 g)		
Amount	Cereal	With 1/2 cup skim milk
Calories	200	240
	% Daily Value	
Fat 1 g*	2 %	2 %
Saturated 0.2 g + Trans 0 g	1 %	2 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	0 %	1 %
Sodium 200 mg	8 %	11 %
Carbohydrate 45 g	15 %	17 %
Fibre 6 g	24 %	24 %
Sugars 9 g		
Protein 6 g		
Vitamin A	0 %	8 %
Vitamin C	0 %	0 %
Calcium	2 %	15 %
Iron	50 %	50 %



This claim can only be used if a product is made of whole grains. Choose products with this claim.

Cholesterol Free Claim

POTATOES

Cholesterol-Free Potatoes are a good source of vitamin C, vitamin B6, and potassium

Low-Sodium

Good Source of Fiber

Fat-Free

[per medium, baked Russet potato]

GROOVY BEE®

37g CARBS

4.6g PROTEIN

0.2g FAT

4g FIBER

164 CALORIES

- What it means: An insignificant amount of cholesterol
- Where you might see this claim: Potato chips


Note: Cholesterol only comes from animals. Cholesterol free products may still be high in saturated fat.



Resources to help you read food labels

- Making healthy food choices video and tip card series on the Cardiac College website
- Go to: [Eat Healthy >> Making Healthy Food Choices >> Select a category](#)

Choosing a Healthy Soup



Fresh soup in the refrigerator section often has the **lowest sodium**

Making your own soup?



Look for fresh, frozen or canned legumes and vegetables to add to your soup



Look for herbs and spices to add flavour to your soup without adding any salt

Check the nutrition facts table



Choose soup and soup broth that has **5% or less** daily value of sodium



Choose soup that has **15% or more** daily value of fibre



Check the package for the nutrition claim **High Source of Fibre**

Disclaimer: These tips are for information only. They do not replace advice from your doctor.

Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive

Serving Size (250 mL) / Portion (250 mL)

Amount Teneur		% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories	140	
Fat / Lipides	1g	2%
Saturated / saturés	0.3g	0%
+ Trans / trans	0g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol	0mg	0%
Sodium / Sodium	140mg	6%
Carbohydrate / Glucides	18g	6%
Fibre / Fibres	4g	16%
Sugars / Sucres	7g	
Protein / Protéines	3g	
Vitamin D / Vitamine D	0mcg	0%
Calcium / Calcium	43mg	4%
Iron / Fer	2mg	10%
Potassium / Potassium	188mg	4%