



## Look at the Label



You may have never looked at food labels. It's easy to be confused when you look at the packaging claims and then look at the label. (Hello, low fat, reduced fat, light and lean.)

With a little practice, you can learn how many nutrients, sodium, fat and sugars are in packaged foods and how many calories each serving is worth.

One thing to look for in foods is added sugar. Sugars are found naturally in fruits and milk. Added sugars are sugars and syrups that are added to foods. They are often found in baked goods, fruit drinks and dairy-based desserts. Avoid these as they give you empty calories, little nutrition and add to weight gain.

To see if a food has added sugar, look at the food label for words that include "sugar" or "-ose" at the end of a word. These words include:

- brown sugar, powdered sugar, invert sugar, white granulated sugar, raw sugar
- dextrose, fructose, lactose, sucrose
- corn syrup
- honey and nectars
- maple syrup and molasses.

# how to read a food label

Many foods in the grocery store have Nutrition Facts labels. These labels tell you what is in the food you are eating.

Knowing how to read food labels will help you make good choices.

Turn this over to learn how to read a food label.



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## How to Read a Food Label

- **Serving size:** The serving size lists the amount of food in one serving and the number of servings in one package.
- **Calories:** Calories are a measure of energy released by a food. Try to limit your food choices to those that have less than one-third calories from fat.
- **Total fat:** Total fat includes all types of fat (saturated, unsaturated, trans). Try to eat foods low in saturated and trans fats.
- **Saturated fat:** Saturated fat raises LDL (“bad”) cholesterol. Reduce saturated fats to help protect your heart.
- **Trans fat:** Trans fats can raise LDL cholesterol, lower HDL (“good”) cholesterol, and add to heart disease. Eat as little trans fats as possible. Avoid foods that contain “partially hydrogenated” oils.
- **Cholesterol:** Foods from animals (meat, fish, eggs, cheese, butter) have cholesterol.
- **Sodium:** You need sodium (salt) to help your organs work well and keep your fluids in balance. Too much sodium can lead to high blood pressure. One teaspoon of salt has 2,400 milligrams of sodium. This is the upper limit most people need each day.
- **Total carbohydrate:** Carbohydrates give your body energy. Too many can raise your blood glucose. Everyone’s blood glucose is affected by carbohydrates differently.
- **Fiber:** Fiber is the part of food that cannot be broken down during digestion. Because it moves through your body “undigested,” it plays an important role in keeping your digestive system moving and working well.
- **Total sugars:** This is the total amount of natural sugars such as lactose (sugar in milk) or fructose (sugar in fruit) and added sugars.
- **Added sugars:** Part of the total sugars is added when the food was made.

# Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container

**Serving size** 2/3 cup (55g)

**Amount per serving**

**Calories** **230**

|                               | <b>% Daily Value*</b> |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Total Fat</b> 8g           | <b>10%</b>            |
| Saturated Fat 1g              | <b>5%</b>             |
| <i>Trans</i> Fat 0g           |                       |
| <b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg        | <b>0%</b>             |
| <b>Sodium</b> 160mg           | <b>7%</b>             |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g | <b>13%</b>            |
| Dietary Fiber 4g              | <b>14%</b>            |
| Total Sugars 12g              |                       |
| Includes 10g Added Sugars     | <b>20%</b>            |
| <b>Protein</b> 3g             |                       |
| Vitamin D 2mcg                | <b>10%</b>            |
| Calcium 260mg                 | <b>20%</b>            |
| Iron 8mg                      | <b>45%</b>            |
| Potassium 235mg               | <b>6%</b>             |

\*The % Daily Value 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 of labels: U.S. Food and Drug Administration**

- **Protein:** Protein is important for healing, building muscle, strengthening your immune system.
- **Percent (%) daily value:** This number tells you if a serving is low or high in the listed nutrients. In general:
  - 5% or less is low in the nutrient
  - 20% or more is high in the nutrient.