

# The Nutrition Facts Label: What's Changing



Allina Health



## **Changes to the Nutrition Facts Label**

Most foods in the grocery store will have a nutrition facts label. You will find it on the back or side of the package.

In 2016, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced there would be a new look for the nutrition facts label on packaged foods. This was in effort to help consumers make better, more informed food choices. By law, all nutrition facts labels must be changed to the new look by January 1, 2020. In the meantime, you may see the “old” or “new” nutrition facts labels as you shop.

## Out with the old, in with the new

Here are some of the changes made to the old label.

- Larger text for:
  - calories
  - servings per container
  - serving size.
- Bold text for:
  - calories
  - serving size.
- Manufacturers must include the amount and percent (%) daily value for:
  - added sugars
  - vitamin D
  - calcium
  - iron
  - potassium.

Manufacturers may choose to include the amount of other vitamins and minerals but this is not required by law.
- It is no longer required to include information about:
  - calories from fat
  - vitamin A
  - vitamin C.
- Daily values have been updated for:
  - sodium
  - dietary fiber
  - vitamin D.

- The note at the bottom of the label explaining what “percent daily value” means has changed. (See labels on next pages to compare.)
- Serving sizes are based on the amount consumers are actually eating (not what is recommended for a proper serving size). For example, one can of soda (12 ounces) is one serving instead of  $\frac{3}{4}$  can (8 ounces). Most people will drink the entire can, which is why the serving size has been changed.
  - For foods and beverages that should be more than one serving but will most likely be eaten or drunk in one sitting, manufacturers must provide a “dual column.” A dual column will include the amount of calories and nutrients in one serving and one package. For example, you will find a dual column on a 2-ounce bag of chips, which will list the number of calories and nutrients in one serving and the entire bag.
- The ingredient list has not changed. The manufacturer must list the ingredients in order of weight. Allergens must also be listed after “Contains:” or in bold lettering within the ingredient list.

Now that you’ve read through the changes, let’s look at examples of the old and new nutrition facts label.

The old nutrition facts label

# Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g)

Servings Per Container About 8

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**Amount Per Serving**

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**Calories** 230

Calories from Fat 72

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**% Daily Value\***

**Total Fat** 8g 10%

Saturated Fat 1g 5%

*Trans* Fat 0g

**Cholesterol** 0mg 0%

**Sodium** 160mg 7%

**Total Carbohydrate** 37g 12%

Dietary Fiber 4g 16%

Sugars 12g

**Protein** 3g

Vitamin A 10%

Vitamin C 20%

Calcium 45%

Iron 6%

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

The **new** nutrition facts 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 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.

## The main parts of a nutrition facts label

Understanding how to read a nutrition facts label can help you know exactly what's in a food and how to make wise choices. Here are the main parts of a nutrition facts 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 or beverage.
- **Total fat:** Total fat includes all types of fat (saturated, unsaturated, trans). Fat is a major source of energy for the body. It also helps the body absorb important vitamins.
- **Saturated fat:** Saturated fat raises LDL ("bad") cholesterol. Reduce saturated fats to help protect your heart.
- **Trans fat:** Trans fats may increase LDL ("bad") cholesterol and decrease HDL ("good") cholesterol, which increases your risk for 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. Your body produces enough cholesterol for important functions such as digesting fats, making hormones and building cell walls.
- **Sodium:** Your body needs sodium to help its organs function well and fluids to be in balance. Sodium (salt) is typically used to add flavor and increase the amount of time foods stay fresh. A healthy amount of sodium to consume each day is 2,300 milligrams (mg) or less.
- **Total carbohydrate:** Carbohydrates give your body energy.
- **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 functioning 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:** Added sugars are sugars added during the making (processing) of foods. Examples include sugar, honey, pure cane sugar, cane sugar, corn syrup, molasses, brown sugar, agave syrup, maple syrup — and more! Studies have shown consuming more than 10 percent of your total daily calories from added sugar makes it less likely that you will meet your nutrient needs (while staying within your calorie goal). Remember to read the ingredients list to look for sources of sugar!
- **Protein:** Protein is important for healing, building muscle, strengthening your immune system, helping your body recover from stress and more!
- **Percent (%) daily value:** Your body needs more of some nutrients (calcium, dietary fiber, potassium) and less of others (total fat, saturated fat, sodium, added sugars) to function at its best. The % daily value will help you know how much of that nutrient your body needs. In general for each nutrient:
  - 5% daily value or less is considered low
  - 20% daily value or more is considered high.

Next time you shop, take a look at the nutrition facts labels on the foods and beverages you're putting in your cart. You'll likely find that making wise food choices is easier when you understand how to read the nutrition facts label!

## **Whom to Call With Questions**

Talk with your dietitian or primary care provider if you have questions.

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