

# Get the Facts!

## Steps to Reading and Understanding Nutrition Facts Labels

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You can make quick, informed decisions about foods by following these steps to reading Nutrition Facts labels on food packages.

Amount Per Serving		% Daily Value*	
<b>Calories</b>	250	Calories from Fat	110
<b>Total Fat</b>	12g		18%
Saturated Fat	3g		15%
Trans Fat	3g		
<b>Cholesterol</b>	30mg		10%
<b>Sodium</b>	470mg		20%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b>	31g		10%
Dietary Fiber	0g		0%
Sugars	5g		
<b>Protein</b>	5g		
Vitamin A			4%
Vitamin C			2%
Calcium			20%
Iron			4%

  

	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

**Look at the serving size and number of servings in the package.**  
*Tip:* Ask yourself, "How many servings am I eating?"

**Look at the number of calories in one serving.**  
 All the rest of the information on the label is based on one serving.  
*Question:* Looking at the nutrition label, how many calories would you get from consuming two servings of this food?  
 A. 470    B. 110    C. 250    D. 500  
*Answer:* D. Eating two servings of this product would provide you with 500 calories.

**Compare the amount of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium to the total amount recommended (see information at the bottom of label or % Daily Value). Try to minimize trans fat in your diet.**  
 Eating too much of these may increase your risk of developing chronic diseases. Eating too much saturated fat and/or trans fat, for example, may increase your risk of heart disease.

**Check the amounts of dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron.** Getting enough of these nutrients in your diet may lower your chances of developing some diseases/conditions. For instance, getting enough calcium may help lower your risk of developing osteoporosis, a condition of weakened, fragile bones.

**Check out the % Daily Value.** Food labels list percentages of the recommended daily intakes of several nutrients. The numbers are based on a 2,000-calorie diet and are used for adults who are 18 years or older. If you consume more or less than 2,000 calories per day, you still can use % Daily Values as a reference.

## Quick tips:

- Aim to eat less than the % Daily Value for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium.
  - For example, the recommended daily value for cholesterol is 300 milligrams, which would be 100 percent of the daily value. Try to eat less than 300 milligrams of cholesterol per day.
- Eat foods that are higher in % Daily Value for vitamins, minerals and fiber.

Use this reference guide for evaluating a product's % Daily Value:

- “Low” = 5% or less of the Daily Value
- “High” = 20% or more of the Daily Value

*Question:* Which of the following does/do not have a % Daily Value?

- A. Trans fat   B. Sugars   C. Protein   D. All of these

*Answer:* D

Sugars have no daily reference value because no recommendations have been made for the total amount of sugars to eat in a day.

Protein needs are more individualized and should be based on an individual's weight and physical activity.

Experts could not provide a reference value for trans fat nor any other information that the Food and Drug Administration believes is sufficient to establish a Daily Value or % Daily Value.

## Label A

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (245g)			
Servings Per Container			
Amount Per Serving			
<b>Calories</b> 80		Calories from Fat 0	
		% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 0g			0%
Saturated Fat 0g			0%
Trans Fat 0g			
<b>Cholesterol</b> 5mg			2%
<b>Sodium</b> 105mg			4%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 12g			4%
Dietary Fiber 0g			0%
Sugars 12g			
<b>Protein</b> 8g			
Vitamin A 10%	•	Vitamin C 0%	
Calcium 30%	•	Iron 0%	
* 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
Calories per gram:			
Fat 9	•	Carbohydrate 4	• Protein 4

## Label B

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (244g)			
Servings Per Container			
Amount Per Serving			
<b>Calories</b> 120		Calories from Fat 45	
		% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 5g			8%
Saturated Fat 3g			15%
Trans Fat 0g			
<b>Cholesterol</b> 20mg			7%
<b>Sodium</b> 100mg			4%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 11g			4%
Dietary Fiber 0g			0%
Sugars 11g			
<b>Protein</b> 8g			
Vitamin A 10%	•	Vitamin C 0%	
Calcium 30%	•	Iron 0%	
* 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
Calories per gram:			
Fat 9	•	Carbohydrate 4	• Protein 4

## Compare Labels

*Question:* Which of the following labels is reduced-fat milk and which is nonfat milk? Which has more saturated fat and cholesterol? Which has more calcium and vitamin A?

*Answer:* Label A is nonfat milk and Label B is reduced-fat milk. Reduced-fat milk has more saturated fat and cholesterol. Both nonfat milk and reduced-fat milk contain the same amounts of calcium and vitamin A.

## Reference

“How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label.” Food and Drug Administration. [www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html)

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