

Reading Food Labels

You can learn to make healthy food choices by using nutrition labelling information while shopping. Nutrition information found on packaged foods includes: the Nutrition Facts table, the ingredient list and the nutrition claims. These give you information about the nutritional value of a food.

The **Nutrition Facts** table gives you information about:

- calories
- 13 nutrients
- % Daily Value (DV) of nutrients

All the information in the Nutrition Facts table is based on an amount of food. This amount is called the serving size, and is always found at the top of the Nutrition Facts table (see example on next page). Make sure you are comparing the same serving size. Also keep in mind that children do not always eat an entire serving at one time and other times they may eat more than a serving.

You can use the % DV to compare two different food products. This allows you to choose products that are higher in the nutrients you want more of, and lower in the nutrients you want less of. If a product has less than 5% DV of a certain nutrient, it has a little of that nutrient. If a product has more than 15% DV of a nutrient, then it has a lot of that nutrient.

Nutrients you may want less of are: fat, saturated and trans fats, sugar, sodium:

- 5% DV or less is a little.

Nutrients you may want more of are: fiber, vitamin A, calcium, iron:

- 15% DV or more is a lot.

DID YOU KNOW?

Children do not need to limit nutritious foods that contain fat, but they should limit foods that are high in fat and low in nutrition, such as potato chips, french fries and processed baked goods.

The **ingredient list** shows product ingredients from most to least. This means the food contains more of the ingredients at the beginning of the list and less of the ingredients at the end of the list.

A **nutrient content claim** (a claim the product contains certain nutrients, usually written in large letters on the package) can help you choose foods that contain a nutrient you may want more of. Look for words such as:

- source (*ex: source of fibre*)
- high or good source (*ex: high in vitamin A; a good source of iron*)
- very high or excellent source (*ex: excellent source of calcium*)

A nutrient content claim can also help you choose foods that contain a nutrient you may want less of. Look for words such as:

- free (*ex: sodium free; trans fat free*)
- reduced (*ex: sodium-reduced*)

A **health claim** can help you choose foods you may want to include as part of a healthy diet, to reduce the risk of chronic diseases. An example of a health claim is: *a healthy diet rich in a variety of vegetables and fruit, may help reduce the risk of some types of cancer.*

Nutrient claims and health claims are optional (don't have to be on the package), and they only highlight one nutrient. You will need to refer to the Nutrition Facts table to make good food choices for children.

Reading Nutrition Labels

Nutrition Facts 1			
Per 4 crackers (20 g) 2 3			
Amount		% Daily Value	
Calories 90			
Fat 3 g			5 %
Saturated Fat 0.5 g + Trans Fat 1 g			8 %
Cholesterol 0 mg			
Sodium 130 mg			5 %
Carbohydrate 14 g			5 %
Fibre 2 g			8 %
Sugars 2 g			
Protein 2 g			
Vitamin A	0 %	Vitamin C	0 %
Calcium	0 %	Iron	4 %

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Ingredients: Whole wheat, vegetable oil shortening, salt

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Low fat, cholesterol-free, source of fibre

1. Nutrition Facts table
2. Serving size (specific amount of food)
3. % Daily Value
4. Calories and core nutrients
5. Ingredient list
6. Nutrient content claim