

How to Read the Nutrition Labels

The Food and Drug Administration and the US Department of Agriculture have designed Nutrition Facts Label to make it easy for you to check at a glance without any fancy math whether a certain food fits into your diet, and to be able to compare the “healthiness” of one food or brand versus another.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size: 1 Cup (55g/2.0oz)	
Servings per container: 8	
Amount Per Serving	Cereal
Calories	190
Fat Calories	10
% Daily Value	
Total Fat 1.0 g	2%
Saturated 0 g	0%
Polyunsaturated 0.5 g	
Cholesterol 0 g	0%
Sodium 0 g	0%
Potassium 150 g	5%
Total Carbohydrate 45g	15%
Dietary Fiber 6g	24%
Sugars 12g	
Other Carbohydrate 27g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 0%	Niacin 25%
Calcium 0%	Folate 25%
Thiamin 25%	Phosphorus 15%
Amount in cereal. One half cup skim milk contributes an additional 40 calories, 65 mg sodium, 6 g total carbohydrate(6 g sugar), and 4 g protein	
Percent daily values are based on 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 65 g 80g
Sat Fat	less than 20 g 25 g
Cholesterol	less than 300 g 300 g
Sodium	less than 2,400 mg 2,400 mg
Potassium	3,500 mg 3,500 mg
Total Carb	300 g 375 g
Dietary Fiber	25 g 30 g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	

Serving Size

The new food labels have standard serving sizes for the same type of food. For instance, all brands of yogurt have a standard serving size of 8 oz. This allows comparing different brand much easier. The serving size is not necessarily the amount you actually eat. If you eat more, you will have to adjust the numbers on the label upward.

PERCENT OF DAILY VALUE

These numbers tell you how much the food supplies toward the daily nutritional needs of a 2000 calorie diet – the average for the country. This number than women and dieters aim for, and lower than muscular or more active people need. Look for high values for fiber, vitamins and minerals. Look for low values for fat, sodium and sugar.

AMOUNT PER SERVING

The label lists the substances that nutrition experts think that people should be eating more of, such as Vitamins and iron. Substances such as fat and saturated fat are required on the label. Listing poly- and mono-unsaturated fats is voluntary. The more healthy foods are those with a big difference between total calories and calories from fat. Saturated fats are the worst kind of fat to eat. Each company can decide which Vitamins and minerals which they include on the label.

DAILY VALUES FOOTNOTE

This only appears on large food packages. It has nothing to do with the food in the package. It lists the daily nutrient values for a 2000 and 2500 calorie per day diet. Notice that the sodium and cholesterol levels are the same for both.