

# Eat Right

Food, Nutrition and Health Tips from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics



## Shop Smart – Get the Facts on the New Food Labels

You may have already noticed some differences in the way the Nutrition Facts panel looks. The new and improved Nutrition Facts Label will help you make better decisions about the foods and beverages you eat and drink. Become a smart shopper by reading food labels and start making healthier choices today.

- Find out which foods are good sources of dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.
- Compare similar foods to find one that meets your calorie needs.
- Look for foods that are lower in saturated fat, *trans* fat, sodium, and added sugars.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<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	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%

\* The % Daily Value (DV) 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: FDA

FOR REFERENCE ONLY

### Start with the Servings Per Container and Serving Size

- Look here for both the number of servings in the package and the serving size (the amount for one serving).
- Serving sizes on the new label reflect the portions most people are eating or drinking, not what they should be consuming.
- Remember to compare the portion you take to the serving size listed on the label. If the label serving size is one cup, and you eat two cups, you are getting twice the calories, fat and other nutrients listed on the label.
- For packages that contain more than one serving but could reasonably be eaten in one sitting, a second column will be listed to show the nutrition information for the whole package.

For more food label information, visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration at <https://www.fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/whats-new-nutrition-facts-label>

## Let the Percent Daily Values Be Your Guide

Use percent Daily Values (DV) to help you evaluate how a particular food or beverage fits into your daily eating plan:

- Daily Values are average levels of nutrients for a person eating 2,000 calories a day.
- Remember: percent DV are for the entire day – not just for one meal or snack.
- Everyone is unique. You may need more or less than 2,000 calories per day. For some nutrients, you may also need more or less than 100% DV.
- 5 percent or less is low – try to aim low in saturated fat, *trans* fat, sodium and added sugars.
- 20 percent or more is high – try to aim high in vitamins, minerals and dietary fiber.

## Limit Saturated Fat, Trans Fat and Sodium

Eating less of these may help reduce your risk for some chronic diseases.

- Limit saturated fats to less than 10% of total calories per day starting at age 2 by replacing them with unsaturated fats.
- Limit *trans* fats to as low as possible.
- Limit sodium to less than 2,300 mg daily and even less for children younger than age 14.

## Limit Sources of Added Sugars

Foods and drinks with added sugars often lack nutrients and take the place of more nutritious foods. Examples of added sugars include white granulated and brown sugars, as well as syrups, nectars, honey and other sweeteners.

On the new labels, the amount of added sugars will show grams per serving and a percent DV.\*

- Limit added sugars to less than 10% of your total calories per day starting at age 2. (Sources of added sugars should be avoided for children under the age of 2.).

\*Products sold separately, such as bags of sugar or bottles of honey will only display the percent DV.

## Nutrients That May Be Lacking

The new labels put a focus on nutrients many Americans don't get enough of, including vitamin D, calcium and potassium. Iron is also listed, since young children, adolescent girls, and women who are capable of becoming pregnant may not get enough. These nutrients have replaced vitamins A and C on the new label.

## Check the Ingredient List

Foods with more than one ingredient must have an ingredient list on the label. Ingredients in the largest amounts (by weight) are listed first.

Food manufacturers are also required to state if food products contain any ingredients that are derived from the eight major allergenic foods: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and soybeans.

## What Claims on Food Labels Really Mean

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has strict guidelines on how certain food label terms can be used. FDA also sets standards for health-related claims and nutrient content claims to help consumers identify foods that are rich in nutrients and those that may help to reduce the risk for certain diseases based on the available research.

For example, health claims may highlight the link between calcium, vitamin D and osteoporosis or sodium and high blood pressure (hypertension).

These are some of the claims that are seen on food packaging, as defined by the FDA:

- **Reduced** – 25% less of the specified nutrient or calories than the usual product.
- **Good source of** – Provides at least 10% of the DV of a particular nutrient per serving.
- **Fat-free / sugar-free** – Less than ½ gram of fat or sugar per serving.
- **Low sodium** – 140 mg or less of sodium per serving.
- **High in (or Excellent source of)** – Provides 20% or more of the DV of a specified nutrient per serving.

**For a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist and for additional food and nutrition information, visit [www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org).**

**eat<sup>®</sup>  
right.** Academy of Nutrition  
and Dietetics

The Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. The Academy is committed to improving health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy.

This tip sheet is provided by:



Authored by Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics staff registered dietitian nutritionists.

Sources: US Food and Drug Administration, Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics Complete Food & Nutrition Guide, 5th edition

©2021 Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Reproduction of this tip sheet is permitted for educational purposes. Reproduction for sales purposes is not authorized.