

# Nutrition Labels 101

Nutrition labels are a good source of information when selecting products at the grocery store. Use this tip sheet as a guide for making informed choices while shopping!

Serving size is the amount a typical eater consumes in a single sitting, not necessarily how much will meet an individual need. Serving size is important because all the information that follows is based on this amount.

Carbohydrates are a valuable source of energy for our bodies. This section also includes fiber, which helps us feel fuller, longer and slows down sugar absorption. A new addition to the food label is "added sugars," which is defined on the bottom of this page.

Protein helps with building and repairing tissue; it's found in every cell. The body also uses extra protein as an energy source. Protein is also filling and increases satiety of food.

<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>
Trans 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.	

Calories are a unit of measure for energy in food and can be a helpful guide for daily nutrition needs but should not be the sole focus when determining nutritious value of food.

Fat is important for our diet (the brain is 60% fat!), but not all fats are created equal. Experts agree we should limit saturated fats and avoid trans fats. More nutritious sources of fat include olive oil, avocado, fatty fish, and nuts. Fat also contributes to making food more satisfying.

Vitamins & minerals support body functions and are often better absorbed when from food sources than from supplements. Nutrition labels include actual amounts on top of the % Daily Value.

\*\*The break out of added sugars is a recent addition to the nutrition label. Some sugars in food are naturally occurring, like in fruit or dairy products. Added sugars are the sugars and syrups added to a food; desserts, sodas, and sports drinks are the top sources of added sugar. Recommended intake of added sugar is 6 teaspoons/25 grams for women and 9 tsp/36 grams for men.

# Food Labels Decoded

Many food products have nutritional claims pasted all over the packaging. It's hard to tell what is true and what is bogus. Use this tip sheet to help you decipher each claim!

## Natural

This is a marketing term used by food companies. The term "natural" is not regulated by the FDA and is very deceiving for consumers.



Genetically Modified Organisms or GMOs are plants, animals,

**Non-GMO** or microorganisms whose genetic makeup has been changed in a lab. Currently, there is no scientific consensus on the safety of GMOs. Because of this, some choose to avoid them. There is also concern of their environmental impact.

## Sugar-Free

Be wary of this label. If a food is labeled sugar-free, it typically contains artificial sweeteners. Some people are sensitive to these, and there may be ill health-effects.

## Organic

Regulated by the USDA, foods labeled "Organic" have to contain 95% organic ingredients. The organic seal is optional, but the certifying agency must be listed. Products labeled "Made with Organic Ingredients" must contain 70% and use of the seal is prohibited.



## Gluten-Free

Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye, and barley. Those with Celiac disease must avoid gluten. Some people may have a gluten sensitivity and choose to avoid it to limit digestive upset and other symptoms.



## Fat-Free

"Fat-free" or "Reduced Fat" are also misleading labels. Often, this means the food is heavily processed to remove fat and add other questionable ingredients. Many fat-free products have more added sugar to improve the taste.