

Reading Food Labels



A Table of Contents for Your Food

Somewhere on that box or bag or can that you've picked up at the grocery store is a little box of information titled, "Nutrition Facts." Elsewhere on that food container are other pieces of information, all of which are required by law to be available to you, the consumer. In order to assist consumers in making informed choices about the food they eat, the federal Nutrition Labeling and Education Act went into effect in 1990. This act applies to most foods sold in sealed packages or cans. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug

Administration set the requirements for the kinds of information consumers would find useful. All food labels must contain the following:

1. Common name of the product
2. Name and address of the product's manufacturer
3. Net contents in terms of weight and count
4. Ingredients
5. Nutrition facts and serving sizes. Most packaged foods put the serving size and all the other required information into that "Nutrition Facts" box.

Food packages must also list the ingredients in a certain order. The first item on the list is the largest in quantity and weight within the food. The second item is the second largest in quantity and weight, and so on through the list. The list of ingredients may be anywhere on the box.

Nutrition facts provide information you can use to make smart food choices. Keep in mind the following:

- If you eat two servings of the food, you need to double the calories and the % Daily Value of the nutrients listed on the label.
- When you look at the label, check the calories first. Then check the nutrients to decide if the food is worth eating as far as nutritional value.
- Watch for added sugars (caloric sweeteners such as sucrose, glucose, fructose, or corn syrup). They add calories, not nutrients. Also look at the ingredient list to see how close to the beginning these sugars are listed.
- Fat should be in the range of 20% to 35% of the calories you eat.
- Most sodium comes from processed food, not the salt shaker. Choose foods lower in sodium and higher in potassium.
- Compare similar products and make your choices based on calories per serving, nutrients, sodium and sugar content.

For more information on food labels, please visit:

http://www.kidshealth.org/kid/stay_healthy/food/labels.html

<http://www.healthchecksyste.ms.com/label.htm>

<http://www.healthierus.gov/dietaryguidelines>

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Kooky Kookies Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 2 cookies (14 g) Servings Per Container About 22		<i>What Does This Mean?</i>	
Amount Per Serving		<i>The label information is based on ONE serving, but many packages contain more. If you eat more than one serving, you do the math!</i>	
Calories 60 Calories from Fat 15		<i>Number of calories per serving and number of calories from fat.</i>	
% Daily Value*			
Total Fat 1.5 g		2%	<i>The Percent Daily Value is a general guide of the nutrients in a food serving. It shows you how much of the recommended daily intake of that nutrient is present in one serving of this food. As mentioned below, these are based on a daily diet of 2,000 calories.</i>
Saturated Fat 0g		0%	
Trans Fat 0g			
Cholesterol 0mg		0%	
Sodium 70 mg		3%	
Total Carbohydrate 10g		3%	
Dietary Fiber Less than 1g		3%	
Sugars 1g			
Protein 1g			
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%	<i>Look for foods that are rich in these nutrients.</i>	
Calcium 0%	Iron 2%		
* Percent Daily Values as 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	2400mg	2400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g
<i>Most nutrients are measured in grams (written as g). Some nutrients are measured in milligrams (mg). There are 1,000 milligrams in a gram. Look for foods low in fat. Limit sodium/salt. Reach for healthy, wholesome carbohydrates like fruits, vegetables, beans, and whole grains. Limit foods with added sugars (like sucrose, glucose, fructose, or corn syrup) that add calories but not other nutrients. Look for protein sources that are lean, low-fat, or fat free.</i>			