

INSPIRED

To Make Healthy Choices

Every time we shop, we are surrounded by numerous choices of the same type of products.

These products have all been market tested to assure that the packaging and labels attract us. One way to control this marketing is to take the time to read the labels and compare similar products to **choose the healthiest nutritional option.**

These tips are a great guide to understanding the information on the labels.

- **Check the number of calories per serving and serving size.**

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g) Servings Per Container About 8	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 230	Calories from Fat 72

- **Pay attention to how many servings you are eating;** if you double the serving you eat, you need to double the calories and nutrients. **That is one of the most common mistakes people make when reading food labels.**
- **Pay attention to types and amounts of fat.** Both saturated and trans fats can be harmful, while monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats are beneficial. **Keep the intake of saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol as low as possible.**

	% Daily Value
Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%

- **Check for sugar and sweeteners.** Be aware, sugar can also be listed as high-fructose corn syrup or corn syrup, agave nectar, barley malt syrup or dehydrated cane juice, to name just a few. Also, it's important to realize that **ingredients are listed in order of quantity.** Check how early it is listed as you look at all the ingredients.

- **Check for sodium.** Like sugars, there are numerous ways it can be listed, such as salt, sodium benzoate, disodium or monosodium glutamate (MSG) or sodium nitrate. The American Heart Association **recommends no more than 1,500 milligrams of sodium a day.** The average American consumes twice the amount.

Total Carbohydrate 37g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 1g	
Sodium 160mg	7%

- **Unpronounceable ingredients** include many chemicals that producers add to improve flavor. There are artificial and natural flavors and both contain chemicals. The difference between the two is the source of the chemicals. **Natural flavors are created from anything that can be eaten (i.e., animals and vegetables),** even if those edible things are processed in the lab to create flavorings while **artificial flavors come from anything that is inedible (i.e. petroleum)** which is processed to create the chemicals of flavorings.

The **% Daily Value (%DV)** information gives the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving, in terms of the daily recommended amount. **To consume less of a nutrient, such as saturated fat or sodium, pick foods with a lower %DV. To eat more of a nutrient, such as fiber or iron, look for a higher %DV.** Using %DV is especially helpful when checking marketing nutrient claims, such as less, light, low or free.

It is also important to remember that the **information on the labels is based on a daily diet of 2,000 calories.** You may need to consume less or more than 2,000 calories depending upon your age, gender, activity level, and whether you're trying to lose, gain or maintain your weight.

Food labels are an important tool we can use to compare items, make smarter choices and build healthier diets!

Don't be fooled, always look at what makes one serving and how many servings are in the package!

A teaspoon of table salt has about 2,300 mg of sodium.

According to the American Heart Association, more than 75% of the salt we consume comes from packaged foods.

For more information, check out <http://www.fda.gov/Food>

For more information:
DEMISTIFYING:
FOOD LABELS
 www.guideinc.org

