

5 Checks Read Food Labels for Healthy Choices

Important Tips to Consider

Food labels provide nutrition facts and information about the foods that you eat.

- ✓ Always read the facts on the label carefully.
- ✓ Follow the recommended storage instructions.
- ✓ Check the expiry date.
- ✓ Do not purchase a packaged food product which is not marked and labelled.
- ✓ Look for the warnings on the label.
- ✓ Be alert to product recalls.

- 1. Check serving size** - Servings Per Container represents the number of servings found in the food package and tells how much food makes up a single serving.
- 2. Check calories** - Calories listed tell you how much energy you get from one serving of a packaged food.
- 3. Check Percent Daily Value (% DV)** - % Daily Value puts nutrients on a scale from 0% to 100%. This scale lets you know if there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in one serving of a packaged food.
- 4. Check to keep these low**
 - Saturated fats, trans fats (hydrogenated) – The Total fat equals the number of grams of fat per serving of the food. A heart-healthy diet limits foods containing saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, and sodium.
 - Cholesterol – This tells you how many milligrams of cholesterol and what percent this is of the recommended daily value. Trans fats, dietary fats and cholesterol have been shown to raise LDL (low density lipoprotein).
 - Sodium – Choose packaged foods with a low % Daily Value of fat, sodium and sugar especially if you are at risk for heart disease or diabetes.
- 5. Check to get enough of these**
 - Carbohydrates – Whole grain foods are healthier than their refined alternatives. If you have diabetes, watch how much carbohydrate you eat as this will affect your blood glucose levels.
 - Sugars – Avoid foods with added sugars. They are listed in the ingredients like fruit juices, jams and beverages or soft drinks.
 - Fiber – Foods that are usually high in fiber include fruits, vegetables and whole grain cereals. Reading food labels can help you to choose foods that are high in fiber.
 - Vitamins A and C, calcium, potassium and iron - Choose packaged foods with a high % Daily Value of these nutrients.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 5 oz (140g)	
Servings Per Container about 6	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 290	Calories from Fat 180
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 20g	31%
Saturated Fat 7g 36%	
Cholesterol 60mg	20%
Sodium 780mg	32%
Total Carbohydrate 30g	10%
Sugars 28g	
Protein 15g	
Vitamin C 10%	• Iron 4%
Not a significant source of dietary fiber, vitamin A, and calcium.	
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	



World Health Organization

Regional Office for South-East Asia
World Health House
Indraprastha Estate,
Mahatma Gandhi Marg,
New Delhi-110002, India
Website: www.searo.who.int

How to understand FOOD LABELS

Make informed food choices



World Health Organization

Regional Office for South-East Asia



Why food labelling is done?

- People are interested in knowing components of what they eat.
- People are becoming conscious of the health, safety characteristics of the food they eat.
- Helps people to compare and understand the differences between food products which may look alike but are actually different in terms of nutritional value.
- Protects people with particular health risks such as allergies or heart disease.
- Instructs people about how to prepare foods properly to ensure that they are eating safe foods.
- Helps people make choices based on their cultural beliefs.

What nutritional information is provided by the label?

- The ingredient list (Descending order) tells you what ingredients are in a packaged food
- The Nutrition Fact table provides you with information on the calories, protein, carbohydrate, sugar, fats, sodium, etc. for the serving size shown.
- Food additives (colours and preservatives)
- Declaration regarding Non vegetarian, Vegetarian food
-  is for the non vegetarian food
-  is for the vegetarian food
- Allergy warnings
- Advisory and warning statements

What information does the label provides?

- Name of the food
- Brand name
- May have description of the food
- Net quantity by weight or volume or number
- Instructions for use and storage
- Best Before, Use By Date, month and year of packing
- Price
- Lot or Code or Batch identification
- Recall information
- Name and address of the manufacturer
- Country of origin for imported food
- Barcode

Does every prepackaged food carries a label?

Every prepackaged food carries a label containing dietary and food safety information. The label should be clear, readable and prominently displayed with appropriate information.

What does food labelling includes?

It includes any written, printed or graphic matter that is present on the label, accompanies the food, or is displayed near the food, including that for the purpose of promoting its sale or disposal.

