



FOOD FACTS

From the U.S. Food and Drug Administration

A Key to Choosing Healthful Foods

Using the Nutrition Facts on the Food Label

Have you ever read the Nutrition Facts label on food packages and wondered: serving sizes, percentages, daily values – what do they all mean? Well, you're not alone. Many consumers would like to know how to use the Nutrition Facts label more easily and effectively — and help is finally here.

Use this information to make quick, informed food choices that contribute to healthy lifelong eating habits for you and your family.



Product Info and “Daily Values”

The Nutrition Facts label is divided into **Two Main Areas**:

- **Sections 1-5** provide **product-specific information** (serving size, calories, and nutrient information). These vary with each food product.
- **Section 6** is a **Footnote with Daily Values (DVs)**. The footnote provides information about the DVs for important nutrients, including fats, sodium and fiber. The DVs are listed for people who eat 2,000 or 2,500 calories each day.
 - The amounts for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium are **maximum amounts**. That means you should try to stay below the amounts listed.
 - The DVs for total carbohydrate and dietary fiber daily represent the **minimum amounts** recommended for a 2,000-calorie diet. This means you should consume at least this amount per day for each of these nutrients.
 - The footnote is only found on larger labels, and does not change from product to product.

Details on the Daily Value

3 Easy Ways to Use the % Daily Value

1. Look at highs and lows.

The %DV gives you a framework for deciding if a food is high or low in a nutrient. Use the Quick Guide to %DV: 5% or less is low and 20% or more is high.

Compare products – Use the %DV to compare one food product or brand to a similar product. Make sure the serving sizes are similar, especially the weight (e.g., gram, milligram, ounces) of each product so you can see which foods are higher or lower in nutrients.

2. Evaluate claims.

So you don't have to memorize definitions, use the %DV to help you quickly distinguish one claim from another, such as “reduced fat” vs. “light” or “nonfat.” Just compare the %DVs for Total Fat in each food product to see which one is higher or lower in that nutrient. **There is no need to memorize definitions.** This works when comparing all nutrient content claims, e.g., less, light, low, free, more, high, etc.

3. Make dietary trade-offs.

Make dietary trade offs using the %DV. For example, when a food you like is high in saturated fat, select foods that are low in saturated fat at other times of the day.



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What's On the Label?

Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)		
Servings Per Container about 2		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110	
		% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g		18%
Saturated Fat 3g		15%
Trans Fat 3g		
Cholesterol 30mg		10%
Sodium 470mg		20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g		10%
Dietary Fiber 0g		0%
Sugars 5g		
Proteins 5g		
Vitamin A		4%
Vitamin C		2%
Calcium		20%
Iron		4%
* Percent Daily Values are 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
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g 375g
Dietary Fiber		25g 30g

1 Serving Size

This section is the basis for determining number of calories, amount of each nutrient, and %DVs of a food. Use it to compare a serving size to how much you actually eat. Serving sizes are given in familiar units, such as cups or pieces, followed by the metric amount, e.g., number of grams.

2 Amount of Calories

If you want to manage your weight (lose, gain, or maintain), this section is especially helpful. The amount of calories is listed on the left side. The right side shows how many calories in one serving come from fat. In this example, there are 250 calories, 110 of which come from fat. The key is to balance how many calories you eat with how many calories your body uses. **Tip:** Remember that a product that's fat-free isn't necessarily calorie-free.

3 Limit these Nutrients

Eating too much total fat (including saturated fat and trans fat), cholesterol, or sodium may increase your risk of certain chronic diseases, such as heart disease, some cancers, or high blood pressure. The goal is to stay below 100%DV for each of these nutrients per day.

4 Get Enough of these Nutrients

Americans often don't get enough dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron in their diets. Eating enough of these nutrients may improve your health and help reduce the risk of some diseases and conditions.

5 Percent (%) Daily Value

This section tells you whether the nutrients (total fat, sodium, dietary fiber, etc.) in one serving of food contribute a little or a lot to your total daily diet.

The %DVs are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Each listed nutrient is based on 100% of the recommended amounts for that nutrient. For example, 18% for total fat means that one serving furnishes 18% of the total amount of fat that you could eat in a day and stay within public health recommendations. Use the Quick Guide to Percent DV (%DV): 5%DV or less is low and 20%DV or more is high.

6 Footnote with Daily Values (DVs)

The footnote provides information about the DVs for important nutrients, including fats, sodium and fiber. The DVs are listed for people who eat 2,000 or 2,500 calories each day.

– The amounts for total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium are maximum amounts. That means you should try to stay below the amounts listed.

