

How to Read a Nutrition Label

Understanding the ingredient list and the nutrition facts table on a food package can help you make informed food choices. Follow the simple label reading guide below and you will be well on your way to making healthier choices at the grocery store!

Review the Ingredient List

An ingredient list is mandatory for all processed foods. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. This means the ingredients listed first are present in the largest amounts.

Using the ingredient list will:

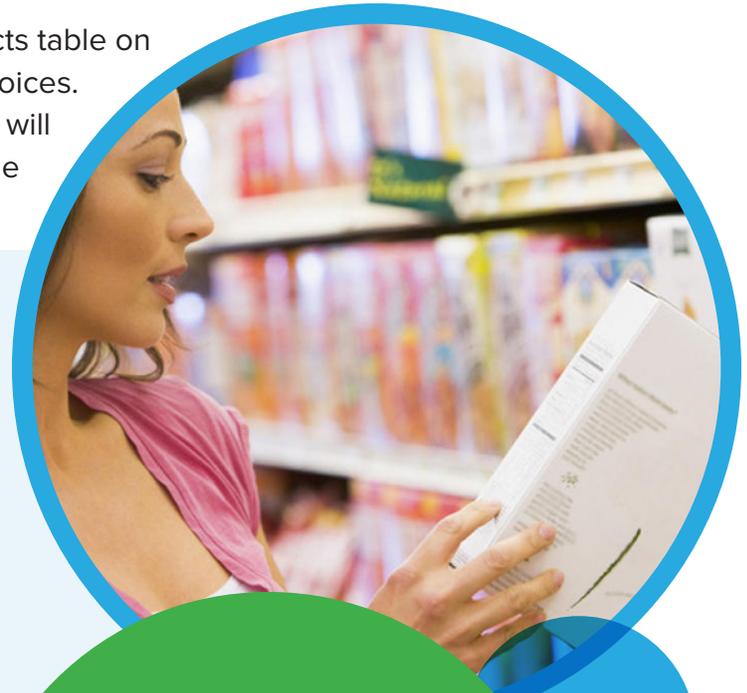
- Help you see what is in the product
- Help you compare food products
- Provide you with information about certain ingredients, such as allergens and additives

Check the Nutrition Facts Table

Most packaged foods will have a nutrition facts table. The nutrition facts table contains information on the serving size, calories, nutrients and percent daily values.

The nutrition facts table can help you:

- Find out which food products are good sources of nutrients such as fibre, calcium, iron, and vitamin C
- Compare similar foods to find out which product is higher in vitamins and minerals and lower in sugar or sodium
- Manage a special diet. For example, if you are following a low-salt diet you can look to the nutrition facts table to find out how much sodium is in a food product



While choosing whole foods is the best choice, you can make better choices about packaged products by using the ingredient list and nutrition facts table.



Nutrition Tips breads and cereals

Breads

Choose breads with:

At least 2-4 g fibre /slice
200mg sodium or less/slice

Try:

- Silver Hills
- Country Harvest
- Dave's Killer Bread
- One Degree Organic

Breakfast Cereals

One serving of most cereals is 30g. some cereals are more nutrient dense and one serving is 50g.

Choose cereals with:

- 3g total fat or less (note: a cereal that contains nuts may be higher in fat – choose a smaller portion)
- Protein: 5g or more
- Sodium: 200mg or less
- Total carbohydrate: 20-25g
- Fibre: at least 4g
- Sugars: 10g or less-Choose cereals without dried fruit and add your own at breakfast

Try:

- Kashi
- Dorset

Protein is an important component of a balanced breakfast. Most breakfast cereals provide little protein. To boost the protein in your breakfast cereal try adding plain Greek yogurt to hot cereal, Holy Crap® or hemp/ chia seeds to cold cereal or opt for a higher protein cereal choice.

Reading the Nutrition Facts Table

1. Serving Size. The nutrition information on the label is based on a specific amount of food, often called the “serving size”.

Look at the serving size on the label and compare it to the portion of food you eat. For example, if the serving size is 1 cup and you eat 2 cups, you are eating twice the amount of nutrients listed in the nutrition facts table.

2. Calories. Check calories to determine how much energy a food provides per serving. Remember, calories are only one part of the nutrition picture.

3. Percent Daily Value. Daily values are average amounts of nutrients based on a 2000kcal diet. They were created by using on standards established for health outcomes, healthy growth and development, and reduced risk of nutrition-related chronic disease.

The percentage daily value tells you if a food contains ‘a little’ or ‘a lot’ of a nutrient.



Facts	
Box (39g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 100	Calories from Fat 0
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 95mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 24g	8%
Dietary Fiber 2g	9%
Sugars 8g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 8%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 0%	Iron 8%
Vitamin D 8%	Thiamin 20%
Riboflavin 20%	Niacin 20%
Vitamin B ₆ 20%	Folic Acid 20%
Vitamin B ₁₂ 20%	Zinc 8%

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 Box (27g)	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 100	Calories from Fat 0
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 95mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 24g	8%
Dietary Fiber 2g	9%
Sugars 8g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 8%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 0%	Iron 8%
Vitamin D 8%	Thiamin 20%
Riboflavin 20%	Niacin 20%
Vitamin B ₆ 20%	Folic Acid 20%
Vitamin B ₁₂ 20%	Zinc 8%

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
Sat. 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

Choose food products “Low” in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol and Sodium.

Low is 5% or less

Choose food products “High” in vitamins, minerals, and fibre.

High is 15% or more

Nutrition Tips

granola/energy bars & frozen meals

Granola/Energy Bars (per bar)

Fat: 5 g or less

Total Carbohydrate: around 20g to 25g

Fibre: at least 2 g

Sugars: around 10 g

Protein: at least 3 g

Try:

Kashi bars

Lara bars

Elevate Me bars

Frozen Meals

Energy: approximately 300 to 500 calories

Fat: maximum 10-15g

Sodium: 500 mg or less

Protein (women): at least 15 g

Protein (men): at least 21 g

Fibre: at least 2 g

Freezer meals can often be higher in sodium, lower in protein and fibre. When choosing Freezer meals remember to review the ingredient list and aim to choose brands that have whole foods listed.

Tip - Add a handful of fresh or frozen vegetables or leafy greens like spinach when microwaving

Try:

- President's Choice Blue Menu
- Healthy Choice Steamers
- Luvo Steam in Pouch

Nutrition Claims

Nutrition claims are not mandatory but instead are used by manufacturers to help market their products.

These manufacturers must comply with strict regulations when making a nutrition claim.

Two types:

Nutrient Content Claims Examples:

High fibre - the food contains at least 4 grams of fibre per serving

Excellent source of ... - the food provides at least 25% of the recommended intake of a specific nutrient

Low in salt - the food product contains 25% less salt compared to an original version of that particular food product.

Health Claims Examples:

"A healthy diet including a large variety of fruits and vegetables can help to reduce the risk of some types of cancers." "A healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats can reduce the risk of heart disease. [Name of the food] is low in saturated and trans fats."

Keep in mind....

It is important to consider your own health situation when deciding whether a food product is a healthy option.

Just because it provides beneficial nutrients such as fiber, calcium, iron, and vitamin D does not always make the food a healthy choice. Consider that the product may also be higher in sodium or added sugar which are nutrients we try to limit.

On the highway to health, think of a health check as an indicator that you are on the right road, but you need to read the signs to reach your destination. Look at the ingredient list and nutrition facts label to evaluate your food choices.





Sharpen your skills.

Can you identify the better nutrition buy?

Look at the nutrition facts tables and ingredient lists below for two cereal products. Apply the nutrition tips for cereal and identify which cereal is the better option.

Cereal 1	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (53g) Kashi GOLean Crunch	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 190	
	% Daily Value
Total Fat 3g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	5%
+ Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 100mg	5%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	13%
Dietary Fiber 8g	20%
Sugars 13g	
Protein 9g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 6%	Iron 15%

Cereal 2	
Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 1/4 cup (29g) Kellogg's Special K	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 110	
	% Daily Value
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
+ Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 270mg	11%
Total Carbohydrate 22g	7%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 2g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 2%	Iron 30%

Ingredients:

Whole: Hard Red Wheat, Brown Rice, Barley, Triticale, Oats, Rye, Buckwheat, Sesame Seeds, Soy Flakes, Brown Rice Syrup, Dried Cane Syrup, Chicory Root Fiber, Whole Grain Oats, Expeller Pressed Canola Oil, Honey, Salt, Cinnamon, Mixed Tocopherols for Freshness.

Ingredients:

Rice, wheat gluten, sugar, wheat germ, salt, modified milk ingredients, malt flavour (corn flour, malted barley), Vitamins and minerals: iron, thiamine hydrochloride, d-calcium pantothenate, cholecalciferol (vitamin d3), pyridoxine hydrochloride, folic acid. Contains wheat, barley, and milk ingredients.

Steps

1. Look at the nutrition facts table and ingredient list for cereals on the inner left panel.
2. Determine the amount of Fat, Sodium, Carbohydrate, Fiber, Sugar and Protein in 30g of each cereal. (Note: nutrition facts table displays the amount of each nutrient in approximately 50g of Cereal 1 and 30g of Cereal 2.)
3. Look at the ingredient list for each of the cereal options.
4. Compare your findings for each nutrient to the nutrition tip for cereals.
5. Decide which cereal best meets the nutrition tips.



Answer: Cereal 1

Reference: **cereal 1.** www.kashi.com | **cereal 2.** www.specialk.caw