

The Nutrition Facts Label - An Overview

When you're at the grocery store it's hard to take the extra minute to look at the food labels of the items you're buying. But reading the label is really the only way to know for sure what you're eating. This cheat sheet will make the process a little easier.

In the following Nutrition Facts label, certain sections have been colored to help you focus on the areas that will be explained in detail. You will not see these colors on the food labels on products you purchase.

Check the serving size, particularly how many servings there are in the container. If there are 2 and you eat the whole container, you're eating double the calories that are on the label!

Try to minimize saturated and trans fat. These are both bad fats that clog arteries.

Get enough fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium and iron.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12 g	18%
<i>Saturated Fat</i> 3 g	15%
<i>Trans Fat</i> 3 g	
Cholesterol 30 mg	10%
Sodium 470 mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31 g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5 g	
Protein 5 g	
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
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

This list gives percentages that are based on recommended daily allowances based on a 2,000 calorie per day diet. However many people's calorie needs may be significantly less than 2,000.

For example, a label may show that a serving of food provides 30% of the daily recommended amount of fiber. This means you may need another 70% to meet the recommended goal. Remember this is just an estimate, but it serves as a good guide.

The less cholesterol and sodium you eat, the better. The latest recommendation for sodium is less than 2,300 mg per day for adults.

Try to keep sugars low. More sugar means more calories.

Source: Adapted from healthiergenerations.org and <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html>