

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
8 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>2/3 cup (55g)</b>
<b>Amount per serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<small>% Daily Value*</small>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 8g	<b>10%</b>
Saturated Fat 1g	<b>5%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 160mg	<b>7%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g	<b>13%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 12g	
Includes 10g Added Sugars	<b>20%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 8mg	45%
Potassium 235mg	6%
<small>* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.</small>	

## UNDERSTANDING NUTRITION LABELS

Food labels are informative and may help guide your decisions if you understand how to interpret them. Remember, though, not to use nutrition information to deprive yourself or ignore your body's signals about what it wants and needs. Nutrition information should be a tool, not a weapon.

### Ingredient List

The ingredient lists tell you what was used to prepare the food. Ingredients are listed in order from the most to the least based on weight. This list is really helpful for getting the specifics, particularly if you have allergies, prefer to avoid eating certain ingredients (high-fructose corn syrup or hydrogenated and partially hydrogenated oils, for instance), or want information about additives and preservatives.

### Nutrition Facts

Use the Nutrition Facts to educate yourself about the nutrient content of food, but not to label food as "good" or "bad." The FDA announced the new

Nutrition Facts label in 2016. Here is a brief overview with helpful tips for interpretation.

**Serving Size** Check the listed serving size and the number of servings per container first. The portions listed are not necessarily recommended amounts, and they may or may not represent what most people eat. Use the Servings Per Container to estimate one serving (for example, one-fourth of the container). Don't forget, hunger and fullness levels should determine how much you eat, not just the amount listed on the food label.

The nutrient information and Percent Daily Values listed on the food label are based on one serving. If the serving size is one cup and you consume two cups, multiply all numbers by two. Some products will have two labels to indicate the amount of calories and nutrients as both "per serving" and "per package."

**Calories** The number of calories in one serving is listed in bold print.

**Percent Daily Value (%DV)** Keeping track of your daily intake is time-consuming, tedious, and in most cases, unnecessary. Percent Daily Values (%DV) were designed to help consumers quickly see how much of their daily needs are being met through the selected food item.

Located on the right side of the label, the %DV tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. %DVs are reference numbers based on a person who consumes 2,000 calories a day. This may be more or less than what your body needs. Although not exactly individualized, %DV can be used to evaluate the food in hand. For nutrients you want to eat more of, like fiber and calcium, you may want to see higher %DVs. For those nutrients you want to eat less of, like saturated fat and sodium, look for lower %DVs.

**Fat** On the label, total fat, saturated fat, and trans fat are listed in grams (g) and as a %DV. That doesn't mean you shouldn't eat a food with a high %DV for fat; it simply means you'll want to balance it by selecting other foods with a lower %DV. For example, you may select cheese (a higher-fat food) but accompany it with wheat crackers or fruit (lower-fat foods).

**Cholesterol** Cholesterol is listed on the label in milligrams (mg) and as a %DV.

**Sodium** Sodium is a mineral used by the body to control blood pressure and blood volume. Most nutrition experts recommend a daily maximum of 2,300 milligrams of sodium. The amount of sodium in a serving of food is listed in milligrams (mg) and as a %DV.

**Carbohydrates** These are listed as Total Carbohydrate (in grams and %DV), Dietary Fiber (in grams and %DV), Total Sugars, and grams of Added Sugars. The 2015-2020 Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends consuming less than 10% of your daily diet from added sugars.

**Protein** Protein is listed in grams per serving. Compare this with the personal daily protein needs you estimated for yourself in chapter 14.

**Vitamins and Minerals** The new Nutrition Facts labels must include the amount and %DV of vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium. Others may be listed; only these four are required. This information will help you target nutrient-rich foods, but the best way to ensure that you get all the vitamins and minerals you need is by eating a wide variety. (For more details, read the section on micronutrients in chapter 15.)

## Nutrition Claims

You'll also sometimes find nutrition claims listed on the front of a package, describing various nutritional qualities. These descriptors can be helpful if you know what they mean (and sometimes misleading if you don't).

### Basic Terminology

*Free:*

- Calorie-free: less than 5 calories per serving
- Fat-free: less than 0.5 grams of fat (or less than 0.5 grams of saturated fat and 0.5 grams of trans fat) per serving
- Cholesterol-free: less than 2 mg of cholesterol per serving
- Sugar-free: less than 0.5 grams of sugar per serving

*Low:*

- Low Calorie: 40 calories or less per serving
- Low Fat: 3 grams or less of fat (or 1 gram of saturated fat) per serving
- Low Cholesterol: 20 mg or less of cholesterol per serving
- Low Sodium: 140 mg or less of sodium per serving
- Low Carb: There are currently no guidelines for the use of this term.

*Reduced, Less, Fewer* (such as Reduced Calories or Less Fat): at least 25 percent less (calories, sugar, or fat) than a similar product

*Light:* One-third fewer calories, half the fat, or half the sodium of a similar food. Caution: light can also describe the texture and the color of the product.

*Lean:* A serving of meat, poultry, or seafood that contains less than 10 grams of fat, 4.5 grams of saturated fat, and 95 grams of cholesterol.

*Extra Lean:* Less than 5 grams of fat, 2 grams of saturated fat, and 95 mg of cholesterol

## Health Claims

Health claims on food labels are claims by manufacturers of food products that their food will reduce the risk of developing a disease or condition. However, not all health claims are equal.

**Solid** These claims are based on reliable evidence and are approved by the FDA. A specific disease will be stated, such as “Diets low in saturated fat and cholesterol, and as low as possible in trans fat, may reduce the risk of heart disease.”

**Preliminary** These are based on incomplete or unreliable evidence and will include a disclaimer like “The FDA has determined the evidence is inconclusive.”

**Structure/Function** These unreliable claims do not require any evidence. Look for words like “maintains” (as in maintains bone health) and “supports” (as in supports the immune system). These are found on food and supplements and require no approval by the FDA.

## Nutrition Labels in the Real World

- Nutrition labels are also available for fresh meats, seafood, and produce; just ask your grocer.
- Don't forget to check the label on your vitamin/mineral supplements; remember, more of a good thing is not necessarily better.
- Many fast-food and chain restaurants make nutrition information available to their customers. This information is often available online.
- Many foods that claim “reduced fat” or “low carb” have substituted other ingredients and may have as many calories as the original. If you're going to read the claims on the front of the label, you have to pay attention to the Nutrition Facts on the back, too.
- Products with labels like “reduced,” “light,” or “low” can help you reach your health goals, but if such products don't taste good to you, you won't feel satisfied when you eat them. In that case, it's better to stick with the original version and eat it less often or in smaller amounts. Remember, no food is forbidden.
- To evaluate for vitamin or mineral content, consider the following when looking at the %DVs:
  - > 20% = Excellent source



**MINDFUL MOMENT:** Nutrition information is a tool, not a weapon.