



The

Nutrition Times

PREPARED MONTHLY BY LOCAL DIETITIANS FROM
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Why Read Nutrition Labels?

Canada's Food Guide to Healthy Eating is a great tool to help guide our food choices. However, many of our food choices are canned, frozen or packaged and the nutrition label provides helpful information for selecting healthier choices for these foods. Almost all prepackaged foods must have Nutrition Facts (there are some exceptions, such as spices and foods prepared at the store like bread; salads; or raw meat, fish and seafood).

Nutrition information provided on food labels includes:

- **Nutrition claims** – optional claims that often highlight a feature such as “high in iron” or “trans fat free”.
- **Ingredient list** – all ingredients are listed by weight, from most to least. This list provides important information for people with allergies or health concerns or those who avoid certain ingredients based on their beliefs.
- **Nutrition facts** – provides specific information about certain nutrients. This makes it easier to compare similar foods so that you can choose more of certain nutrients.



Further information about label reading can be found at:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/nutrition/cons/interactive-eng.php>.

<http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/dailyvalue>.

<http://www.healthyeatingisinstore.ca/>



Understanding
Nutrition Labelling
to Make Informed
Food Choices

Canada



Healthy Eating is in Store for You
Faites provision de saine alimentation

How to Read a Nutrition Label

1. Always compare the serving size on the package to the amount that you eat. If you had 2 cups of this food, you would multiply everything by 2.

The serving size may be different than the serving size recommended by Canada's Food Guide.

2. The calories tell you how much energy you get from one serving of the packaged food.

3. Percent Daily Value (% Daily Value) tells you if there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in one serving. Generally, you want:

- 5% or less fat, sodium, and cholesterol
- 10% or less of saturated or trans fat
- 15% or more of fibre, iron, and calcium

Does **every** food you choose have to fit these guidelines? No, but try to choose healthier foods most of the time. Use common sense and moderation. This means that if the label on instant noodles says there is 1750 mg sodium (salt) or 76% of your daily value, this is a LOT of salt. If your canned soup has 30%, this is still high but more reasonable.

A word about fats.....

Most foods do not have cholesterol. Your body makes most of its own cholesterol from the saturated and trans fat you eat which is why these types of fat must be listed. Saturated fats are animal fats like butter, cheese, meat fat, chicken skin, and lard and also palm or coconut oils. Trans fats are hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated oils and shortening found in fried foods and baked goods. It is better to eat healthy types of fat found in vegetable oils (that are non-hydrogenated), nuts, seeds, and fish

Did You Know?

4 grams of fat or sugar = 1 teaspoon. So if a can of pop has 44 grams of sugar, that is 11 teaspoons. If 1 cup of sweetened cereal has 16 grams of sugar, that is 4 teaspoons in 1 serving (assuming you only ate 1 cup, if you eat 2 cups of cereal, you are getting 8 teaspoons of sugar!!!)

A good rule of thumb for cereals and granola or snack bars is to choose the ones that have 10 grams or less of sugar and 3 grams or more of fibre.

Sources:

Health Canada, Nutrition Labelling Interactive Nutrition Label and Quiz at: <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/label-etiquet/nutrition/cons/interactive-eng.php>. 2006.

Dietitians of Canada and Canadian Diabetes Association, Healthy Eating is in Store for You. <http://www.healthyeatinginstore.ca/>. 2007.

Nutrition Facts	
Per 1 cup (55 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Calories 220	
Fat 2 g	3 %
Saturated 0 g + Trans 0 g	0 %
Cholesterol 0 mg	
Sodium 270 mg	11 %
Carbohydrate 44 g	15 %
Fibre 8 g	32 %
Sugars 16 g	
Protein 6 g	
Vitamin A 0 %	Vitamin C 0 %
Calcium 4 %	Iron 40 %

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