

Understanding Nutrition Labels

1. **Title:** When you see the title "Nutrition Facts," you know this is the current information label approved by the Food and Drug Administration.
2. **Serving Size:** Count the serving as the same size as the one on the label, or apply it realistically. If you eat double the serving size listed, you need to double the nutrient and calorie values you are counting.
3. **Calories:** Calories are friends, not foes! You need them for energy to live. Don't focus on cutting them as a whole to lose weight, but rather focus on what *kind* you are eating. Make sure they are *nutrient-dense* calories.
4. **Daily Value:** Daily values are listed for people who eat 2,000 + calories a day. For fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium amounts, choose foods with a low % *Daily Value*. For total carbohydrate, dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals, your daily value goal is to reach 100% of each.
5. **Total Fat:** Try to limit your *calories from fat*. For a healthy heart, choose foods with a big difference between the total number of calories and the number of calories from fat.
6. **Saturated Fat:** Saturated fat is part of the total fat in food. It is listed separately because it's the key player in raising blood cholesterol and your risk of heart disease. Aim for less than 5 grams a day!
7. **Cholesterol:** Too much cholesterol can lead to heart disease. Challenge yourself to eat less than 300 mg each day.

Nutrition¹ Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (243g) ²	
Servings Per Container 5 ³	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 100³ ⁵Calories from Fat 5	
⁴ % Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0.5g ⁵	1%
Saturated Fat 0g ⁶	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg ⁷	2%
Sodium 80mg ⁸	3%
Total Carbohydrate 18g ⁹	6%
Dietary Fiber 1g ¹⁰	4%
Sugars 14g ⁹	
Protein 6g ¹¹	
Vitamin A 8%	• Vitamin C 80%
Calcium 15% ¹²	• 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: ⁴	
	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
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	



8. **Sodium:** You call it "salt," the label calls it "sodium." Either way, too much contributes to high blood pressure and other problems. Keep your sodium intake low -- 2,300 to 2,400 mg or less each day. **If you have hypertension or HBP, try to keep it at 1500 mg or less daily.* *The AHA recommends no more than 3,000 mg sodium per day for healthy adults.

9. **Sugar & Total Carbohydrates:** Carbohydrates & the right kind of sugar (natural!) are fuel for the body, but if they are "empty" they spike your blood sugar. The "right" kinds of carbohydrates are in foods like whole grains, potatoes, fruits and vegetables. They give you nutrients and energy. The "wrong" type of carbohydrates is added sugar or processed carbs – try to choose foods that are low in this number.

10. **Dietary Fiber:** This applies to both soluble and insoluble kinds of dietary fiber. Fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, beans and peas are all nutritious sources and can help reduce the risk of heart disease and cancer. Beware of "added fiber" on food labels as it is not naturally occurring and isn't preferable for your health.

11. **Protein:** Choose lean protein sources, and protein sources low in added sugar. Eat small servings of lean meat, fish and poultry. Use unsweetened almond, coconut, soy and rice milk, low-sugar Greek yogurt and natural cheeses. Try vegetable proteins like beans, grains and green leafys. Nuts, avocado and nut butters are also a great protein source.

12. **Vitamins & Minerals:** Your goal with this category is 100% of each for the total daily amount. It takes a few whole and fresh foods to add up to the total necessary. Choose a combination of whole foods to get you to this goal, and don't rely on packaged foods alone.