

ARE *YOU* ABLE TO READ THE LABEL?

A Consumer's Guide to Navigating Food Labels



Food and Drug Safety Program

Consumer and Environmental Health Services

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<http://nj.gov/health/eoh/foodweb/>

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
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

WHY READ THE LABEL?

- **Reading a label properly is important for people trying to manage their weight**
- **Simple formats enable you to quickly find the information you need to make healthy food choices**
- **Find information on the amount per serving of saturated fat, cholesterol, fiber, and other nutrients of major health concern**
- **% Daily Values that help you see how a food fits into your overall daily diet**
- **Standardized serving sizes make nutritional comparisons of similar products easier**
- **Labels contain critical information about food allergens**



INGREDIENTS

A list of ingredients on a food label will tell you what is in your food. The ingredients appear in descending order by weight. For the example below, sugar is listed first. This means there is more sugar than any other ingredient.

INGREDIENTS: Sugar, enriched bleached flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, soy lecithin, vanilla), partially hydrogenated soybean and cottonseed oils, natural cocoa, cocoa (processed with alkali), wheat starch, salt, natural and artificial flavors (contains butter), sodium bicarbonate.

ALLERGY INFORMATION: This product contains wheat, soy and milk. It is made on equipment that also makes products containing eggs and tree nuts.

ALLERGENS

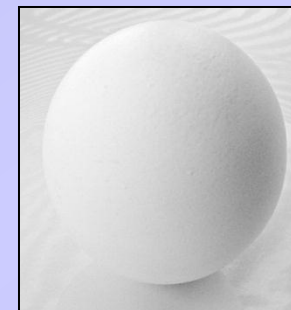
A label will also include information on allergens. Allergens can cause a mild to severe physical reaction in people who are sensitive to them.

INGREDIENTS: Sugar, enriched bleached flour (wheat flour, niacin, reduced iron, thiamin mononitrate, riboflavin, folic acid), chocolate chips (sugar, chocolate liquor, cocoa butter, soy lecithin, vanilla), partially hydrogenated soybean and cottonseed oils, natural cocoa, cocoa (processed with alkali), wheat starch, salt, natural and artificial flavors (contains butter), sodium bicarbonate.

ALLERGY INFORMATION: This product contains wheat, soy and milk. It is made on equipment that also makes products containing eggs and tree nuts.



ALLERGENS



Any food can be an allergen, but these are the
8 MOST COMMON ALLERGENS

Laws require a label warning for any food that may contain allergens or were prepared in a facility that contains allergens.

**MILK
PRODUCTS**

EGGS

PEANUTS

FISH

SHELLFISH

SOY

WHEAT

**TREE
NUTS**

WHAT IS THE NUTRITION FACTS LABEL?

The nutrition facts label informs you what and how many nutrients are in a food, drink, or dietary supplement. It helps you make informed choices about your food.

Foods exempt from this label include:

- foods in very small packages
- foods prepared in the store
- foods made by small manufacturers

Reading a nutrition facts label is not difficult. Let's break it down.



EXAMPLE OF A LABEL

MACARONI AND CHEESE

This label is from a package of one of America's favorite foods, macaroni and cheese. Let's take a closer look at its label.



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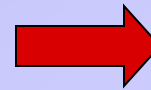
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SERVING SIZE

Serving size tells you the measurement of one serving. All nutrients on the label are based on this amount. Servings per container tells you how many servings are in the package.



This package contains 2 cups of mac and cheese.



MACARONI AND CHEESE

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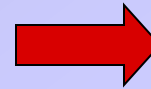
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SERVING SIZE

To calculate the amount of calories or a nutrient in more than one serving:



SERVING AMOUNT X CALORIES or NUTRIENT

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Example: How many calories are in 2 servings (2 cups) of mac and cheese?



1 cup =
250 calories



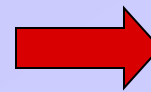
2 cups X 250 calories =
500 calories

So if you ate the whole package of mac and cheese, you would have eaten 500 calories.

CALORIES

Calories come from carbohydrates, proteins, and fats. Because calories give us energy, we need them to think and to carry out everyday tasks.

The 250 calories on the label are the total calories from carbohydrates, proteins, and fats in one serving.



NUTRITION FACT

Fruits and vegetables are very low in calories, but high in nutrition.

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% DAILY VALUE

% Daily Values are based on amounts of nutrients you should get each day. These percentages tell you what percentage of a nutrient that one serving provides.

The mac and cheese label shows that one serving provides 20% of the daily recommended amount of calcium. This means you still need another 80% more calcium for that day.

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NUTRITION FACT

Tomato juice is an excellent source of vitamins A & C, and is low in calories.



FAT

Some people think all fats are bad. This is not true. Fat is essential for our bodies. It is used to:

- insulate nerves
- regulate cholesterol
- absorb vitamins
- help maintain healthy skin and hair
- insulate organs against shock
- store harmful substances

To help you balance good and bad fats in your diet, read the information about fats on food labels. Let's take a closer look.



Fat helps to maintain healthy hair



Woman getting a body fat analysis

FAT

Some fats are good for your heart. Others, like *saturated* and *trans* fats, are not good for you.



**OLIVE OIL =
GOOD FAT**

COMPARE



**FAST FOOD
BURGER = BAD FAT**



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Below are some sources of good and bad fat:

GOOD FAT SOURCES	BAD FAT SOURCES
Olive oil	Ice cream
Oily fish	Cheese
Nuts	Poultry skin
Seeds	Fried foods

TOTAL FAT

Total fat refers to the number of fat grams in one serving. Saturated fats and trans fats are listed separately.

Saturated fats are found in meat, seafood, whole-milk dairy products (cheese, milk, ice cream), poultry skin, and egg yolks.

Trans fats are mostly found in commercial baked goods, margarines, snacks, and processed foods. Fried foods, like french fries, also contain a good deal of trans fat.



NUTRITION FACT

Different types of fats have varied, often confusing effects on your health. But the basic message is simple: avoid the bad fats (like saturated and trans fats) and replace them with good fats.

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THE GOOD FATS

You've learned about saturated fat and trans fats, the "bad fats." Now it's time to learn about the "good fats."

Monounsaturated fats, like polyunsaturated fats, are not always listed on every label. But these fats are healthy for you because they lower your bad cholesterol and increase levels of your good cholesterol. Sources of monounsaturated fats include nuts, canola oil, olive oil.

Polyunsaturated fats also lower your cholesterol levels. Salmon and fish oil, and corn, soybean, safflower, and sunflower oils are high in polyunsaturated fats. Omega 3 fatty acids also belong to this group.



Walnuts, an excellent source of *monounsaturated* fat



To increase *polyunsaturated* fat intake, try salmon

CALORIES FROM FAT

ALL FATS ARE HIGH IN CALORIES

MACARONI AND CHEESE

Calories from fat are the total fat calories in one serving.

The total fat in mac and cheese is 12g (grams) for 1 cup. 12g is 18% of the % Daily Value of total fat.



1 cup of mac and cheese = 18% of % Daily Value of fat

NUTRITION FACT

Avocados are high in fat and calories, but most of an avocado's fat is the good type that actually protects your arteries.



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CALORIES FROM FAT

ALL FATS ARE HIGH IN CALORIES

MACARONI AND CHEESE

You should get no more than 30% of all your daily calories from fat. So if you have 2,000 calories of food in one day, no more than 600 calories should be from fat.

NUTRITION FACT

Eating large amounts of any fat adds excess calories to your diet. Substitute good fats for bad fats (see slide #13).



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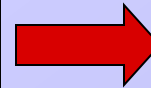
CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol is found in meats and whole-milk dairy products. Ask your doctor to determine what level of cholesterol is safe for you.



NUTRITION FACT

High cholesterol may be controlled with regular exercise and changes in your diet.



There are two kinds of cholesterol:

Low-density lipoprotein (LDL): aka, “bad” cholesterol; clogs the arteries, restricts blood flow

High-density lipoprotein (HDL): aka, the “good” cholesterol; helps to keep bad cholesterol from building up in the arteries

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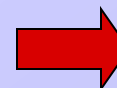
CHOLESTEROL

To properly manage your cholesterol:

- have your cholesterol levels checked regularly
- work with your doctor to develop a prevention or treatment plan
- maintain healthy levels through healthy diet choices, such as increasing your fiber intake
- learn more about cholesterol and how it can affect your health

NUTRITION FACT

Egg yolks have a lot of cholesterol, so they may affect blood cholesterol levels. However, eggs also contain nutrients that may help lower your risk of heart disease.



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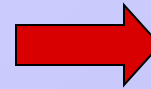
SODIUM

Sodium tells you how much salt is in your food. People with high blood pressure are often told to follow a low sodium diet. Everyone should eat less than 2400 mg (milligrams) of sodium per day.



NUTRITION FACT

Potato chips are high in sodium, fat, and calories. But they are light, so it's easy to eat too many of them in one sitting.



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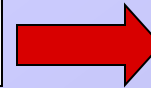
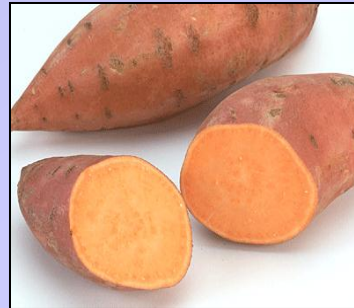
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TOTAL CARBOHYDRATE

Carbohydrates provide energy to your muscles and your brain. Common sources of carbohydrates include:

- rice
- bread
- cereal
- beans
- potatoes
- pasta



NUTRITION FACT

Potatoes, especially sweet potatoes, are a good, cheap source of carbohydrates. They fill you up, but have few calories. Sweet potatoes are also rich in beta-carotene, vitamin A, and potassium.

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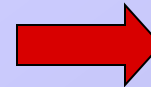
TOTAL CARBOHYDRATE

Certain types of carbohydrates may be listed on a label.

Fiber: helps with digestion and keeps you full between meals

Sugars: important for instant energy, but eating too much can be unhealthy

Starch: used in cooking to thicken sauces, soups, and gravies; not listed on labels, but found on ingredients list



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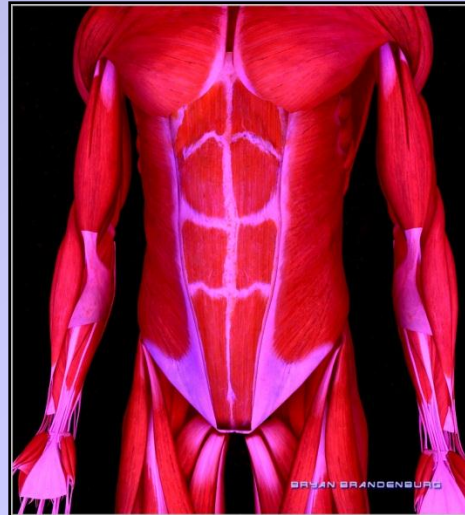
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PROTEIN

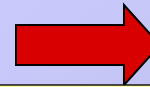
Muscles, organs, antibodies, enzymes, and some hormones are largely composed of protein.

Protein is key for other body functions such as:

- tissue repair
- fluid balance
- blood clotting
- vision



NUTRITION FACT



You can get the minimum daily amount of protein by having cereal with milk for breakfast, a peanut butter and jelly sandwich for lunch, and fish with a side of beans for dinner.

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	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

PROTEIN


Most adults need about 50-60g (grams) of protein per day.

NUTRITION FACT

Good sources of protein are:

- eggs
- milk
- fish
- beef
- soy
- sesame seeds
- chicken
- oats
- rice
- whole wheat
- beans
- peas



% Daily Value will not appear for protein,  because protein intake is not considered a public health concern.

MACARONI AND CHEESE

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)
Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 3g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

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VITAMINS AND MINERALS

This section tells you the percent daily value for Vitamin A, Vitamin C, calcium, and iron. Other vitamins and minerals may also be included in this section.



NUTRITION FACT

Spinach is an excellent source of vitamins A & C, as well as calcium and iron. In salad, it's a great substitute for iceberg lettuce, which has minimal nutritional value.



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Dietary Fiber 0g 0%

Sugars 5g

Protein 5g

Vitamin A 4%

Vitamin C 2%

Calcium 20%

Iron 4%

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FOOTNOTE

On a label, the footnote tells you that all of the daily values come from a recommended 2,000 calorie meal plan.

Some labels, such as this one, also include information based on a 2,500 calorie diet.

Your nutritional needs may be higher or lower than what is recommended.



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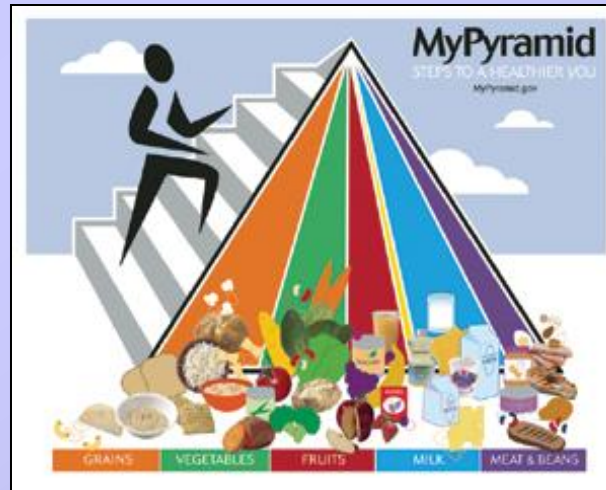


YOUR NUTRITIONAL NEEDS

You can determine your own nutritional needs by creating a personal eating plan based on the foods and amounts that are right for you.

To create your personal eating plan visit the following website:

<http://www.mypyramid.gov>



MACARONI AND CHEESE

After learning about labels, what are some GOOD things we can say about macaroni and cheese?

- good source of calcium
- moderate amount of calories
- low in cholesterol



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MACARONI AND CHEESE

What are some NOT SO GOOD things we can say about macaroni and cheese?

- about 1/2 of calories from fat
- high in sodium
- low in vitamins
- no fiber

SO....

It's not bad to eat mac and cheese. But it should be part of a balanced diet with nutrient rich fruits and vegetables and protein rich foods. Make sure to include other foods that are high in fiber.



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MORE INFORMATION

To download “Are YOU Able to Read the Label?” go to:

<http://nj.gov/health/eoh/foodweb/>

For more information on nutrition and reading nutrition fact labels, visit:

<http://vm.cfsan.fda.gov>

<http://www.cdc.gov>

<http://usda.gov>

<http://www.mypyramid.gov>

For more info about combating obesity and making healthy food choices, go to the Division of Family Health Services website at:

<http://dhss/fhs/index.aspx>

