

Decoding the New Nutrition Facts Label

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has updated the nutrition fact label on packaged foods and beverages to help you make informed choices about the food you eat every day.

Let's look at some of the changes!

1. Servings

The “Servings per Container” and “Serving Size” are typed bolder and larger in size. Serving sizes have been updated to reflect what people eat today. For example, a serving of ice cream was previously $\frac{1}{2}$ cup and is now $\frac{2}{3}$ cup.

There are also new requirements for certain size packages, for example, those between one and two servings must now be labeled as a single serving. Although, for labeling purposes, the FDA considers a serving of soda to be 12 ounces, a 20-ounce bottle must be labeled as one serving because people tend to drink all 20 ounces in one sitting.

In addition foods such as, ice cream in a pint-sized container, that may be eaten all in one sitting but is larger than a single serving must have a “dual column” nutrition facts label. The dual column labels indicate both “per serving” and “per package” amounts of calories and nutrients.

2. Calories

“Calories” is now larger and bolder.



Source: US Food and Drug Administration

3. Fats

“Calories from Fat” has been removed from the label because research shows the type of fat consumed is more important than the total amount of fat.

4. Added Sugars

“**Added Sugars**” is now required on the label. Added sugars includes sugars that are either added during processing of foods or are packaged as such (e.g. a bag of table sugar), and includes sugars from cane sugar, beet sugar, syrups and honey, sugars from concentrated fruit or vegetable juices, and high fructose corn syrup.

Aim for less than 10% of your daily calories from added sugars. For example, a 2000 calorie per day diet, should contain no more than 200 calories per day or about 50 grams of sugar. To put this in context a 20-ounce soda has about 60 grams of added sugars.

5. Nutrients

The list of nutrients that are required or permitted on the label have been updated.

Vitamin D and potassium are now required because Americans do not always get the recommended amounts in their diet.

Vitamins A and C are no longer required because deficiencies of these vitamins are rarely seen today.

The daily values for nutrients have also been updated based on new scientific evidence. The daily values are reference amounts of nutrients to consume or not exceed and are used to calculate the % DV

Use the New Nutrition Facts Label to Choose Your Foods Wisely!

% Daily Value (%DV) shows how much a nutrient in a serving of the food contributes to a total daily diet. Use the % DV to determine if a serving of food is high or low in an individual nutrient and to compare food products (make sure the serving size is the same).

- **As a general guide:**

5% DV or less of a nutrient per serving is low
20% DV or more of a nutrient per serving is high

Nutrients to get less of: saturated fat, *trans* fat, sodium and added sugars.

- Limit saturated fats to less than 10% of total calories and replace with unsaturated fats
- Keep *trans* fats as low as possible
- Limit sodium to less than 2300 mg daily
- Limit added sugars to less than 10% of total calories

Nutrients to get more of: vitamin D, dietary fiber, calcium, iron, and potassium.

- Aim for a high %DV of these nutrients
- Compare and choose foods to get 100% DV of these foods on most days.

Don’t Forget to Check the Ingredient List!

The ingredient list shows each ingredient by its common or usual name. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. The ingredient that weighs the most is listed first and the ingredient that weighs the least is listed last. Food manufacturers are required to state if a food contains ingredients from the eight major foods commonly found to cause allergies: milk, eggs, fish, shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soy beans.

To Learn More about the New Nutrition Facts Label, visit: <https://go.usa.gov/xkHru>

Need a Dietitian?

Registered Dietitians are here to help you with your nutrition questions.

To make an appointment call 412.692.4497 (Oakland location) or 412.623.2421 (Shadyside location).