

Tips for Using the Nutrition Facts Label

Here are some tips for reading the label and making smart food choices:

Check servings and calories.

Compare this to how many servings you are actually eating.

Eat less sugar. Look for foods and beverages low in added sugars. Names for added sugars include sucrose, glucose, high fructose corn syrup, corn syrup, maple syrup, and fructose.

Know your fats. Look for foods low in saturated and *trans* fats, and cholesterol, to help reduce the risk of heart disease. Most of the fats you eat should be polyunsaturated and monounsaturated fats, such as those in fish, nuts, and vegetable oils.

Reduce sodium (salt) and increase potassium. Research shows that eating less than 2,300 milligrams of sodium (about 1 teaspoon of salt) per day may reduce the risk of high blood pressure. If you are age 51 or older, African American, or have hypertension, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease, aim to eat 1,500 milligrams of sodium each day—about $\frac{3}{4}$ teaspoon.

To meet the daily potassium recommendation of at least 4,700 milligrams, consume fruits and vegetables, and fat-free and low-fat milk products, that are sources of potassium, including sweet potatoes, white potatoes, white beans, plain yogurt, prune juice, and bananas. These can help reduce some of sodium's effects on blood pressure.

Sample label for Macaroni & 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%

* 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

① **Start Here** →

② **Check Calories**

③ **Limit these Nutrients**

④ **Get Enough of these Nutrients**

⑤ **Footnote**

⑥ **Quick Guide to % DV**

- 5% or less is Low
- 20% or more is High

Sources: Dietary Guidelines for Americans, *A Healthier You*, Part III.

<http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/dga2005/healthieryou/contents.htm>

National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI), **We Can! Energize Our Families—Parent Program: A Leader's Guide**, pages 114–115.

<http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/public/heart/obesity/wecan/downloads/leadersguide.pdf>