



## Understanding Nutrition Labels

Nutrition food labels provide information regarding energy (calories), fat, protein, carbohydrate, and fiber content, type of fat, and vitamin and mineral content. Investigate the ingredients on the label to identify whether or not foods are highly processed (i.e., changed from its natural state by chemical or mechanical means).

### HERE ARE SOME HELPFUL HINTS WHEN READING FOOD LABELS

- **Be aware of labeled benefits, as these may be covering up for something else.**
- **If you can't define it, neither can your body.** If you struggle with defining label ingredients that seem like chemical names, that's exactly what they are. These ingredients indicate that this is a processed food.
- **Preservatives that make food last longer may have harmful effects on you body.** Common food preservatives include compounds such as sodium benzoate, benzoic acid, nitrates, sulphur dioxide, sodium sorbate, potassium sorbate, and butylhydroxytoluene (BHT). These chemicals are linked with increased allergies, cancer risk, and may disrupt hormone signaling in our body including disrupting signals from our gut to our brain telling us we are full.
- **Substitutes for sugar and fat are not necessarily healthier.** Sugar substitutes are usually artificial or non-nutritive sweeteners which may be associated with allergies, digestive issues and may increase the risk of neurological problems. It is also especially important to avoid high fructose corn syrup which is linked to obesity and liver disease.

Nutrition Facts	
4 servings per container	
<b>Serving size</b>	<b>1 cup (227g)</b>
Amount per serving	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>280</b>
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 9g	<b>12%</b>
Saturated Fat 4.5g	<b>23%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 35mg	<b>12%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 850mg	<b>37%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 34g	<b>12%</b>
Dietary Fiber 4g	<b>14%</b>
Total Sugars 6g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	<b>0%</b>
<b>Protein</b> 15g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 320mg	25%
Iron 1.6mg	8%
Potassium 510mg	10%

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

(Image from fda.gov)

### HOW TO READ A FOOD LABEL

The FDA has detailed instructions on how to read nutrition labels so you can make informed food decisions that will help you choose a healthy diet:

[fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label](https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label)