

TIPS FOR READING LABELS

While learning to read labels is important, the vast majority of the foods you eat WILL NOT HAVE NUTRITION LABELS!

To make an informed choice at the grocery store, you need both the Nutrition Facts and Ingredient List. DO NOT RELY ON THE FRONT OF THE PACKAGE!

1. NUTRITION FACTS: You will find the facts on all packaged foods. Fresh fruit and veggies, raw meat, or foods made in store (such as baked goods, prepared salads etc.) may not have nutrition facts. Nutrition facts break down the calories, fat, protein, carbs, etc.

- Look at serving size first. Be aware that the serving size may differ from the amount you usually eat. For example, a serving of ice cream is ½ cup. Most people have more than ½ a cup of ice cream! If you normally have 1 cup, multiply all the values by 2 to determine how much you're actually eating
- Remember that fat, including saturated fats are not 'bad'. It depends where the fat comes from (ex. Processed hot dogs versus grass fed beef)
- Cholesterol is listed, but is only found in animal products. A lot of vegan products such as peanut butter advertises as being 'cholesterol free' (just an example of why the packaging claims are useless!)
- Grams of sugar will include natural and added sugar, so be sure to read ingredients as well. For example, plain yogurt has sugar in the form of lactose. Fruit is also mostly sugar. The goal is to reduce sugar, and especially added sugar.
- Fibre is often added in the isolated form (example inulin, chicory root extract), which has not been shown to have the same benefits as naturally occurring fibre. This fibre will still show up as fibre on the nutrition facts label. Read the ingredients to determine where the fibre comes from.
- % Daily value helps you determine if there's a little or a lot of the nutrients in the food.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 2 tbsp (32g)	
Servings Per Container 16	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 10	Calories from Fat 0
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 95mg	4%
Total Carbohydrate 2g	1%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 0g	
Vitamin A 6%	• Vitamin C 10%
Calcium 0%	• Iron 0%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

2. INGREDIENT LIST: Lists all the ingredients for a food by weight in order from it from the most to the least.

- In general, the fewer ingredients, the less processed the food is.
- In general, pick foods with ingredients that you can pronounce and that way you know there are fewer additives.
- If you have food sensitivities, look for the culprits here.
- Be aware of the MANY names of sugar (see the handout)
- Avoid hydrogenated fats (look at your peanut butter!)

3. NUTRITION CLAIMS: DO NOT RELY ON NUTRITION CLAIMS! These are usually found on the front of the package and highlight the benefits of the product (ex. Fat Free, Source of Iron, etc.). Rely on the nutrition facts and ingredients list to make informed choices. Nutrition claims are there for marketing purposes.

The best choice is to buy WHOLE, REAL foods, but if you do buy packaged foods, these tips can help!

GRAINS: (cereal, bread, etc.)

Look for high fibre, low sugar and short ingredient list. First ingredients should be WHOLE grain, preferable sprouted.

PROTEIN:

Best options do not have labels. If you buy deli meat, look at ingredient list for preservatives and sodium. Purchase meats with fewer ingredients and free (if possible) of sulphites and nitrites.

NUT BUTTERS:

Buy natural (no sugar added).

OILS:

Oils are pure fat, so expect to see that on the label!

PRE-PACKAGED MEALS/ DINNERS/ SNACK FOODS:

Focus on the ingredient list. Look for fewer ingredients and ingredients you can pronounce. Eat in moderation.

DAIRY:

Best is plain, unsweetened (no added sugar or artificial sweeteners!). Aim for 2-5% fat dairy products. Cheese will naturally have more fat: choose high quality cheese that you LOVE and eat mindfully