

HOW TO READ FOOD LABELS

Use this one-page cheat sheet at the grocery store to decode any food label quickly.

1 *Check the Ingredients List*

- Ingredients are listed in **order of quantity**: what comes first is what the product contains most of.
- If **sugar or any of its aliases** is in the **first 5 ingredients**, that product is a **dessert**, even if it's labeled as a cereal, protein bar, or snack.
- **Common sugar names** to look out for (these are *still* sugar, even if they sound natural):
 - Agave nectar
 - Cane sugar
 - Fruit juice concentrate
 - Glucose
 - Sucrose
 - Rice syrup
 - Honey
 - Maple syrup
 - Maltodextrin
 - "Pressed fruit" or "fruit puree"
 - High fructose corn syrup
 - Click [here for the full list](#)

🍷 If it sounds sweet, fruity, or syrupy, it's sugar.

2 *Read the Nutrition Facts*

Forget calories, they don't tell you how the food affects your glucose. Instead, focus on these 3 lines:

→ **Total Carbohydrates**: this includes all starches and sugars, which turn into glucose.

→ **Dietary Fiber**: slows digestion and reduces glucose spikes.



→ **Protein**: keeps you full, flattens spikes, and supports your body. The more, the better.

3 *Carb-to-Fiber Ratio*

Look for a minimum of **1 gram of fiber for every 5 grams** of total carbs.
This is a natural ratio found in whole fruits and helps reduce spikes.

You can calculate this ratio by finding the number next to Total Carbohydrates and dividing it by 5. Try to find a food that has that amount of Dietary Fiber (or as close to it as possible).

Here's a real life food example of two cereals, both with 25 grams of carbs. The ideal ratio here is: 25 grams divided by the magic number 5, which is equal to 5 grams. So we're looking to have at least 5 grams of fiber.

- Cereal A on the left: 25g carbs, 14g fiber.  Good
- Cereal B on the right: 25g carbs, 2g fiber  Less ideal

 And remember: the **higher the fiber**, the better!

Nutrition Facts		Nutrition Facts	
15 servings per container		15 servings per container	
Serving size 30g		Serving size 29g	
Amount per serving		Amount per serving	
Calories 60		Calories 100	
% Daily Value*		% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1g 1%		Total Fat 0g 0%	
Saturated Fat 0g 0%		Saturated Fat 0g 0%	
Trans Fat 0g		Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg 0%		Cholesterol 0mg 0%	
Sodium 110mg 4%		Sodium 190mg 8%	
Total Carbohydrate 25g 8%		Total Carbohydrate 25g 8%	
Dietary Fiber 14g 57%		Dietary Fiber 2g 8%	
Total Sugars 0g		Total Sugars 7g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars 0%		Includes 7g Added Sugars	
Protein 2g		Protein 2g	
Vitamin D 2mcg 10%		Vitamin D 20%	
Calcium 260mg 20%		Calcium	
Iron 8mg 45%		Iron 30%	
Potassium 240mg 6%		Potassium 2%	
* 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.		* 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.	

4 *Ignore the Front of the Package*

Don't fall for *health halos*! The front is marketing, not science.

Common Traps:

- **"Gluten-Free"** → Doesn't mean low sugar or low carb. Soda is gluten-free!
- **"Vegan"** → Doesn't mean healthy. Sugar and processed oils are vegan.
- **"Organic"** → Still can spike your glucose. Organic sugar is still sugar.

📌 Always flip the package over to see the truth.

Your supermarket checklist

- ✓ Flip the box
- ✓ Scan the first 5 ingredients
- ✓ Check carb-to-fiber ratio (aim for 5:1 or better)
- ✓ Look for higher protein
- ✓ Ignore calories & health buzzwords