

Making sense of nutrition labels

Processed foods have label that provide information on the nutrients in the food. Pay attention to the following:

- **Serving size:** this may be the number of servings in the container or packet and/or the size of each serving in grams, liters, cups, tablespoon, teaspoon etc. A serving is not the actual amount eaten. The portion size is the actual amount eaten. For example if the serving size of cooked rice is one cup, eating 2 cups of cooked rice means that the portion size of cooked rice for that meal is 2 servings of cooked rice.
- **Calories per serving:** this is the energy content in each serving. Therefore, the number of servings consumed determines the number of calories consumed.
- **Total amount of fats:** this is the total fats in grams in each serving
- **Type of fats** (saturated, mono-unsaturated, poly-unsaturated, omega-3-acids, trans-fats)
- **Total amount of carbohydrates:** this is the total carbohydrates in each serving
- **Types of carbohydrates** (starch, sugar, fiber etc)
- **Total amount of proteins**
- **Amino acids in the proteins**
- **Minerals and vitamins present**
- **The % Daily Value (%DV):** this the percentage that each of the nutrient in each serving of the food will contribute to the total daily requirement for that nutrient. It provides a guide on how much nutrients each food contains compared to the daily requirements. For example, if a nutrient (sodium) has %DV of 40%. It means that a serving of the food will contribute 40% of the daily requirements of sodium. This gives an idea of how much nutrients you are eating to meet your daily requirements from processed foods