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URL of this page: https://medlineplus.gov/foodlabeling.html

Food Labeling
Also called: Nutrition labeling

All packaged foods and beverages in the United States have food labels. These "Nutrition Facts" labels can help you make smarter food choices and eat a healthy diet.

Before you read the food label, you should know a few things:

- **Serving size** is based on how much people usually eat and drink at one time
- **Number of servings** tells you how many servings are in the container. Some labels will give you information about calories and nutrients for both the whole package and each serving size. But many labels just tell you that information for each serving size. You need to think about the serving size when you decide how much to eat or drink. For example, if a bottle of juice has two servings and you drink the whole bottle, then you are getting twice the amount of sugar that is listed on the label.
- **Percent daily value (%DV)** is a number that helps you understand how much of a nutrient is in one serving. Experts recommend that you get a certain amount of different nutrients daily. %DV tells you what percentage of the daily recommendation you get from one serving of a food. With this, you can figure out if a food is high or low in a nutrient: 5% or less is low, 20% or more is high.

The information on a food label can help you see how a certain food or drink fits into your overall diet. The label lists, per serving,:

- The number of calories
- Fats [https://medlineplus.gov/dietaryfats.html] , including total fat, saturated fat, and trans fat
- Cholesterol [https://medlineplus.gov/cholesterol.html]
- Sodium [https://medlineplus.gov/sodium.html]
- Carbohydrates [https://medlineplus.gov/carbohydrates.html] , including fiber [https://medlineplus.gov/dietaryfiber.html] , total sugar, and added sugar
- Protein [https://medlineplus.gov/dietaryproteins.html]
- Vitamins [https://medlineplus.gov/vitamins.html] and minerals [https://medlineplus.gov/minerals.html]

Food and Drug Administration

Start Here

- Figuring Out Food Labels [https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/food-labels.html] (Nemours Foundation)
- Use the Nutrition Facts Label [https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/health/educational/wecan/eat-right/nutrition-facts.htm] NIH (National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute)

Related Issues

- Additives In Meat and Poultry Products [https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/additives-meat-and-poultry] (Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service)

- Milk and Plant-Based Milk Alternatives: Know the Nutrient Difference [https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/milk-and-plant-based-milk-alternatives-know-nutrient-difference] (Food and Drug Administration)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.fda.gov/consumers/articulos-para-el-consumidor-en-espanol/la-leche-y-las-alternativas-base-de-plantas-conozca-la-diferencia-de-nutrientes]

- Nutrition Facts for Cooked Seafood [https://www.fda.gov/files/food/published/Nutrition-Information-for-Cooked-Seafood-(purchased-raw)---Medium-PDF-Poster.pdf] (Food and Drug Administration) - **PDF**

- Nutrition Facts for Raw Fruits [https://www.fda.gov/files/food/published/Nutrition-Information-for-Raw-Fruits---small-PDF-Poster.pdf] (Food and Drug Administration) - **PDF**

- Nutrition Facts for Raw Vegetables [https://www.fda.gov/media/70792/download] (Food and Drug Administration) - **PDF**

Specifics

- Food Product Dating [https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/food-product-dating] (Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service)

- Fresh Take on What "Healthy" Means on Food Packages [https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/fresh-take-what-healthy-means-food-packages] 📹 (Food and Drug Administration)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.fda.gov/consumers/articulos-para-el-consumidor-en-espanol/una-nueva-perspectiva-del-significado-de-healthy-saludable-en-los-paquetes-de-alimentos]

- Gluten-Free Labeling of Foods [https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-food-labeling-and-critical-foods/gluten-free-labeling-foods] (Food and Drug Administration)

- Have Food Allergies? Read the Label [https://www.fda.gov/consumers/consumer-updates/have-food-allergies-read-label] (Food and Drug Administration)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.fda.gov/consumers/articulos-para-el-consumidor-en-espanol/tiene-alergias-los-alimentos-lea-la-etiqueta]

- Meat and Poultry Labeling Terms [https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/meat-and-poultry-labeling-terms] (Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service)

- Natural Flavorings on Meat and Poultry Labels [https://www.fsis.usda.gov/food-safety/safe-food-handling-and-preparation/food-safety-basics/natural-flavors-meat-and-poultry] (Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service)

Clinical Trials

- ClinicalTrials.gov: Food Labeling [https://clinicaltrials.gov/search?cond=%22Food+Labeling%22&aggFilters=status:not%20rec] NIH⟩ (National Institutes of Health)

Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Reformulation of ultra-processed products in Colombia after the introduction of public... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40739640]

- Article: Toward Multidimensional Front-of-Pack Labels: Integrating Nutritional, Environmental, and Processing Information. [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40732883]

- Article: Applying the Nova food classification to food product databases using discriminative... [https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40666144]

- Food Labeling -- see more articles [https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Food+Labeling%22%5Bmajr%3Anoexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bedat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+]

Find an Expert

- Food and Drug Administration [https://www.fda.gov/]

- Food and Nutrition Information Center [https://www.nal.usda.gov/programs/fnic]

Children

- Figuring Out Food Labels (For Kids) [https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/labels.html] (Nemours Foundation)

- From the Label to the Table! [https://kids.niehs.nih.gov/topics/healthy-living/food/food-labels]
  NIH〉 (National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences)

- Nutrition Facts -- Read the Label: Tips for Parents [https://www.fda.gov/media/128913/download]
  Infographic (Food and Drug Administration) - **PDF**
  Also in Spanish [https://www.fda.gov/media/128914/download]

Teenagers

- Understanding Food Labels [https://girlshealth.gov/nutrition/healthy_eating/food_labels.html]
  (Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Women's Health)

Older Adults

- How to Read Food and Beverage Labels [https://www.nia.nih.gov/health/healthy-eating-nutrition-and-diet/how-read-food-and-beverage-labels] **NIH**〉 (National Institute on Aging)

- Using the Nutrition Facts Label: For Older Adults [https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/using-nutrition-facts-label-older-adults] (Food and Drug Administration)
  Also in Spanish [https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/uso-de-la-etiqueta-de-informacion-nutricional-para-adultos-mayores]

Patient Handouts

- How to read food labels [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000107.htm] (Medical Encyclopedia)
  Also in Spanish [https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/patientinstructions/000107.htm]

- Nutrition Facts for Cooked Seafood [https://www.fda.gov/files/food/published/Nutrition-Information-for-Cooked-Seafood-(purchased-raw)---Medium-PDF-Poster.pdf] (Food and Drug Administration) - **PDF**

- Nutrition Facts for Raw Fruits [https://www.fda.gov/files/food/published/Nutrition-Information-for-Raw-Fruits---small-PDF-Poster.pdf] (Food and Drug Administration) - **PDF**

- Nutrition Facts for Raw Vegetables [https://www.fda.gov/media/70792/download] (Food and Drug Administration) - **PDF**

Food labeling [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/002459.htm]

How to read food labels [https://medlineplus.gov/ency/patientinstructions/000107.htm]

Related Health Topics

Food Safety [https://medlineplus.gov/foodsafety.html]

Nutrition [https://medlineplus.gov/nutrition.html]

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