

Reading food labels

Understanding how to read food labels can help you make healthy food choices. This resource can help you choose healthier options and compare products.

Nutrition information panel

The following information can be found on the nutrition information panel. You can use this information along with the ingredients list to help choose healthier options.

Serving size

This is the average serving size of the product determined by the manufacturer. This may not be the same as the serving size you consume.

Per 100g column

The 100g column is a useful standard to compare products. Use this information when choosing products to help decide which is the healthier option.

Nutrition Information		
Servings per package: 1		
Serving size: 35g		
	Per Serve	Per 100g
Energy	501kJ	1430kJ
Protein	3.5g	10g
Fat, total	0.4g	1g
-Saturated fat	0.2g	0.5g
Carbohydrate	25.3g	72.2g
- Sugar	7.5g	21.5g
Fibre	3.4g	9.7g
Sodium	185mg	535mg

Saturated fat

Choose foods with less than 3g per 100g.
Exceptions: oil, cheese, nuts and seeds.

Sugar

Choose foods with less than 15g per 100g.

Fibre

Choose foods with 3g or more per serve. Aim for: 25-30g fibre per day.

Sodium (salt)

Choose foods with less than 120mg per 100g.
Limit foods that contain more than 400mg per 100g.

Below are some common claims and what they mean.

- **Low fat:** Contains less than 3g fat per 100g. This does not set apart types of fat.
- **Reduced fat/salt:** Contains at least 25% less fat or salt than the regular product.
- **Light OR Lite:** May be used to describe texture, colour, flavour. The product does not necessarily contain less fat or sugar.
- **No added sugar:** No sugar is added to the product during production. The product could still be naturally high in sugar, for example fruit juice.

Always read the labels rather than relying on front of pack claims to check if it is a healthy choice.

Ingredient list

The ingredients list describes what is in the food. Ingredients are listed in order from the most to the least quantity. If saturated fat, sugar or salt are listed within the first three ingredients, consider choosing a different product.

You may find saturated fat, sugar and salt listed as:

Saturated fat: Beef tallow or beef fat, butter, cream, cocoa butter, coconut oil, copha, hydrogenated oil, lard, palm oil

Sugar: Agave, brown sugar, cane sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, fruit juice concentration, glucose, golden syrup, honey, maltodextrin, maltose, raw sugar, sucrose.

Salt: Baking powder, celery salt, chicken salt, garlic salt, meat extract, mineral salts, monosodium glutamate (MSG), onion salt, rock salt, sea salt, sodium, sodium bicarbonate, yeast extract.

For further information regarding food labels or for specific dietary requirements such as coeliac disease, food allergies or intolerances, contact your dietitian.

Take home messages

- Always read the nutrition information labels and decide if the food is healthy for you based on the nutrition information, not front of pack health claims.