



Healthy Choices

Demystifying food labels

Life is busy and reading food labels is often put in the ‘too hard’ shopping basket. But anyone can become a food label wiz – you just have to know what to look for. We’ve highlighted the important parts on the nutrition information panel so that you can quickly compare foods, check kilojoules and make the healthiest choice for you.

Nutrition Information (AVERAGE)

servings per package - 16 ¹
average serving size - 30g (2/3 cup)

	² Per serve	³ Per 100g
⁴ ENERGY	432kJ	1441kJ
⁵ PROTEIN	2.8g	9.3g
⁶ FAT, TOTAL	0.4g	1.2g
— SATURATED	0.1g	0.3g
CARBOHYDRATES	18.9g	62.9g
⁷ — SUGARS	3.5g	11.8g
⁸ FIBRE	6.4g	21.2g
⁹ SODIUM	65mg	215mg

1 Servings

This tells you how many serves there are in the whole packet (16).

2 Per Serve

This tells you how much of a nutrient, or how many kilojoules you will actually eat if you eat this serve size.

TIP Remember that the serve size on the packet may not be equal to the serve size you actually eat.

3 Per 100g

This column is the easiest way to compare similar products and tells you the nutrients in 100 grams of this food.

TIP When shopping hold up two packages side-by-side and note the differences.

4 Energy

Energy is listed on the panel as kilojoules (kJ). Lower energy normally means lower fat or lower added sugar, making it a better choice for most people.

TIP Work out your daily intake using our kilojoule calculator.

5 Protein

Protein is needed in our diets to help repair and grow muscle.

TIP Aim to eat foods from a variety of protein sources including low fat dairy, lean meat, lentils and pulses.

6 Fat

Fats are essential but saturated and trans fats should be avoided.

TIP Total fat: Aim for 10g per 100g or less. Saturated fat: Aim for 3g per 100g or less. Exceptions: Milk and yoghurt aim for 2g/100g or less and cheese aim for 15g/100g or less.

7 Sugars

It's best to avoid larger amounts of added sugars. If sugar content per 100g is more than 15g, check that sugar (or alternative names for added sugar) is not listed high on the ingredient list.

TIP Aim for 15g per 100g or less.

8 Fibre

Not all labels include fibre. Whole grains, fruit and veggies provide your body with the fibre it needs but breads and cereals with 3g or more per serve are a good source.

TIP Aim for 25-30g of fibre each day.

9 Sodium (salt)

Listed as sodium, salt is often used in packaged foods as a flavour enhancer, which means your salt intake can be high without you knowing it.

TIP Aim for less than 400mg per 100g, or even better 120mg per 100g or less.

Find more info at healthier.qld.gov.au





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Understanding the ingredients panel

Hidden ingredients

Beware! Manufacturers sometimes list fat, sugar or salt content under different names. But whatever they're called, high fat, sugar and salt content generally means the food is less healthy.

1 Ingredients

Cereals (76%) (wheat, oatbran, barley),
2 butter, psyllium husk (11%), **3** sugar, rice, malt extract
honey, **4** salt, vitamins.

1 Ingredients

All ingredients in a food product must be listed from greatest to smallest by weight.

TIP If saturated fat, sodium (salt) or sugars are in the top three, think again!

2 Other names for fat

- beef fat • butter • cream • coconut • coconut oil • copha • hydrogenated oils
- margarine • milk solids • palm oil • vegetable oil • dripping • lard • oil
- palm oil • sour cream.

3 Other names for hidden sugars

- brown sugar • concentrated fruit juice • corn syrup • dextrose • fructose
- glucose • golden syrup • sucrose • honey • lactose • maltose • mannitol
- maple syrup • molasses • raw sugar • sucrose rice malt syrup

4 Other names for sodium/salt

- baking powder • celery/garlic salt • glutamate • mineral salts
- monosodium glutamate; MSG • rock salt • sea salt • sodium
- sodium bicarbonate • stock

Based on information provided by the Heart Foundation and the National Health and Medical Research Council.

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