

# WHAT'S IN A LABEL?

## How to Make Sense of Nutritional Labels...



Nutrition facts have been required by law since 1990. How often do you read them when making a food purchase decision? If you are like many, you may not read them at all. And yet, this critical information can be a key component to improving your health and nutrition.

*What can you find on the labels? The Nutrition Facts panel found on most food labels will help you:*

- Find out which foods are good sources of dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.
- Compare similar foods to find out which one is lower in calories.
- Look for foods that are lower in saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and added sugars.

### Let the Percent Daily Values Be Your Guide

Use percent Daily Values (DV) to help you evaluate how a particular food fits into your daily eating plan:

- Daily Values are average levels of nutrients for a person eating 2,000 calories a day.
- Remember: percent DV are for the entire day— not just for one meal or snack.
- You may need more or less than 2,000 calories per day. For some nutrients you may need more or less than 100% DV.
- 5 percent or less is low — aim low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium.
- 20 percent or more is high— try to aim high in vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber.

### Additional Nutrients

- Carbohydrates — There are three types of carbohydrates: sugars, starches, and fiber. Select whole-grain breads, cereals, rice, and pasta plus fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk and yogurt.
- Proteins — Aim for a variety, including seafood, poultry, lean meats, eggs, beans, peas, nuts, seeds, and soy products.

### Check the Ingredient List

Foods with more than one ingredient must have an ingredient list on the label. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Those in the largest amounts are listed first. Food manufacturers are required to state if food products contain any ingredients that are derived from the eight major allergenic foods: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat and soybeans.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
<b>8 servings per container</b>	
Serving size	2/3 cup (55g)
<b>Amount per 2/3 cup</b>	
<b>Calories</b>	<b>230</b>
<b>% DV*</b>	
<b>12%</b>	<b>Total Fat</b> 8g
<b>5%</b>	<b>Saturated Fat</b> 1g
	<b>Trans Fat</b> 0g
<b>0%</b>	<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg
<b>7%</b>	<b>Sodium</b> 160mg
<b>12%</b>	<b>Total Carbs</b> 37g
<b>14%</b>	<b>Dietary Fiber</b> 4g
	<b>Sugars</b> 1g
	<b>Added Sugars</b> 0g
	<b>Protein</b> 3g
<b>10%</b>	<b>Vitamin D</b> 2mcg
<b>20%</b>	<b>Calcium</b> 260mg
<b>45%</b>	<b>Iron</b> 8mg
<b>5%</b>	<b>Potassium</b> 235mg
* Footnote on Daily Values (DV) and calories reference to be inserted here.	

### Start with the Servings Per Container and Serving Size

- Look here for both the number of servings in the package and the serving size (the amount for one serving).
- Remember to check your portion size to the serving size listed on the label. If the label serving size is one cup, and you eat two cups, you are getting twice the calories, fat and other nutrients listed on the label.

### Check Out the Total Calories

- Find out how many calories are in a single serving.

### Limit Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, Sodium, and Added Sugars

Eating less of these may help reduce your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, and cancer:

- Limit saturated fats to less than 10% of total calories daily by replacing them with unsaturated fats.
- Limit trans fats to as low as possible.
- Limit sodium to less than 2,300 mg daily (for adults and children 14 years and older).
- Limit added sugars to less than 10% of total calories daily.

### Get Enough Vitamins, Minerals and Fiber

- Eat more dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, and potassium to maintain good health and help reduce your risk of certain health problems such as osteoporosis.
- Remember to aim high for % DV of these nutrients.

# March is National Nutrition Month



March is National Nutrition Month, which started as National Nutrition Week in 1973 with a presidential proclamation. Its goal then, as it is now, was “to increase the public’s awareness of the importance of good nutrition.” From new food options, to the abundance of fast food, and a wide range of fad diets, a lot has changed since 1973; however, the importance of good nutrition remains.

Nutritional deficiencies could almost be declared a national emergency since (according to the US Department of Health and Human Services) unhealthy eating habits have contributed to the obesity epidemic in the US: about one-third of U.S. adults (33.8%) are obese, and approximately 17% (or 12.5 million) of children and adolescents aged 2—19 years are obese. Even for people at a healthy weight, a poor diet is associated with major health risks that can cause illness and even death. No one food will provide you with the right amount of nutrients your body needs, which is why you should eat foods from all the different food groups to meet your body’s daily requirements. With that in mind, here are some tips that will help you to make good food choices:

- Choose foods that are low in fat and sugar and low in salt.
- Make a habit of reading food labels and understanding what they mean. Labels show you what must be listed, by law, on the food labels as well as what a serving is (some canned and boxed foods have more than one serving in the container) and how many grams of fat and calories are in one serving. It also shows you which vitamins and minerals are in the food.
- Make half your plate fruits and vegetables: focus on whole fruits instead of fruit juices, and vary your vegetables.
- Make half of your grains whole grains. Check for 100% whole grain or 100% whole wheat on the food label.
- Switch to low-fat or fat-free milk.
- Eat smaller portions at mealtime.
- Drink plenty of water instead of soft drinks.

For more information on ways to improve your food choices and diet, visit *The Right Choice for a Healthier You* website ([therightchoiceforahealthieryou.com](http://therightchoiceforahealthieryou.com)). For more information on National Nutrition Month, visit [eatright.org](http://eatright.org).

## Muffins YOUR Way!

- 1 egg or ¼ cup egg substitute
- 1 cup skim milk
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 2 cups 100% whole wheat flour
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 cup cocoa powder
- ¼ cup white sugar
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 cups shredded, grated, pureed vegetable or fruit \*see options below
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 teaspoons baking soda

Mix together sugar, egg, milk, vanilla, cinnamon and oil. Add remaining ingredients. Bake for 20 -30 minutes at 400 degrees.

*\*Vegetable and Fruit Options (2 cups equivalent) – grated apples, chopped pears, mashed apricots, shredded carrots, grated eggplant, chopped oranges, pureed peaches, cooked and pureed prunes, pumpkin, blueberries, pureed cooked sweet potato or yams, shredded zucchini, pureed cooked spinach, raspberries, etc.*