

Decoding the Nutrition Label

Five easy steps to help you read the label.

Step 1: Look at the serving size:

Compare the serving size on the package to the amount that you eat. If you eat the serving size shown on the Nutrition Facts Table you will get the amount of calories and nutrients that are listed.

Step 2: Look at the calories:

Calories tell you how much energy you get from one serving of a packaged food.

Step 3: Look at the per cent Daily Value (% Daily Value):

% Daily Value puts nutrients on a scale from 0% to 100%. This scale tells you if there is a little or a lot of a nutrient in one serving of a packaged food. Use this percentage to compare the nutrient content of different foods.

- 5% DV or less is a little
- 15% DV or more is a lot

Step 4: Try to get more of these nutrients:

- Fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, iron, calcium

Step 5: Try to get less of these nutrients

- Fat, saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, cholesterol

You can use the Nutrition Facts to:

- Compare products more easily
- Find out the nutritional value of foods
- Better manage special diets, such as one that is low in sodium
- Increase or decrease your intake of a particular nutrient (for example, increase fiber, decrease saturated fat)