

## The Nutrition Facts Label - An Overview:

The information in the main or top section, can vary with each food product; it contains product-specific information (serving size, calories, and nutrient information). The bottom part contains a footnote with Daily Values (DVs) for 2,000 and 2,500 calorie diets. This footnote provides recommended dietary information for important nutrients, including fats, sodium and fiber. The footnote is found only on larger packages and does not change from product to product.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size ½ cup (114g)	
Servings Per Container 4	
<b>Amount Per Serving</b>	
<b>Calories</b> 90	Calories from Fat 30
<b>% Daily Value*</b>	
<b>Total Fat</b> 3g	<b>5%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	<b>0%</b>
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 300mg	<b>13%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 13g	<b>4%</b>
Dietary Fiber 3g	<b>12%</b>
Sugars 3g	
<b>Protein</b> 3g	
Vitamin A 80%	Vitamin C 60%
Calcium 4%	Iron 4%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000    2,500
Total Fat	Less than 65g    80g
Sat Fat	Less than 20g    25g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg    300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg    2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g    375g
Dietary Fiber	25g    30g
Calories per gram: Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	

## The Serving Size:

The first place to start when you look at the Nutrition Facts label is the serving size and the number of servings in the package. Serving sizes are standardized to make it easier to compare similar foods; they are provided in familiar units, such as cups or pieces, followed by the metric amount, e.g., the number of grams. The size of the serving on the food package influences the number of calories and all the nutrient amounts listed on the top part of the label. **Pay attention to the serving size, especially how many servings there are in the food package. Then ask yourself, "How many servings am I consuming"?** (e.g., 1/2 serving, 1 serving, or more) In the sample label, one serving equals one-half cup. If you ate the whole package, you would eat **one** cups. That doubles the calories and other nutrient numbers, including the %Daily Values as shown in the sample label.

## Calories:

Calories provide a measure of how much energy you get from a serving of this food. Many Americans consume more calories than they need without meeting recommended intakes for a number of nutrients. The calorie section of the label can help you manage your weight (i.e., gain, lose, or maintain.) **Remember: the number of servings you consume determines the number of calories you actually eat (your portion amount).**

For example, there are 90 calories in one serving. How many calories from fat are there in ONE serving? Answer: 30 calories, which means almost one-third the calories in a single serving come from fat. What if you ate the whole package content? Then, you would consume two servings, or 180 calories, and 60 would come from fat.

### General Guide to Calories

\*40 Calories is low

\*100 Calories is moderate

\*400 Calories or more is high

The **General Guide to Calories** provides a general reference for calories when you look at a Nutrition Facts label. This guide is based on a 2,000 calorie diet.

**Eating too many calories per day is linked to overweight and obesity.**

## The Nutrients:

The top of the nutrient section in the sample label shows you some key nutrients that impact on your health and separates them into two main groups:

### Limit These Nutrients

The nutrients listed first are the ones Americans generally eat in adequate amounts, or even too much. Eating too much fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, or sodium may increase your risk of certain chronic diseases, like heart disease, some cancers, or high blood pressure.

**Important: Health experts recommend that you keep your intake of saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol as low as possible as part of a nutritionally balanced diet.**

### Get Enough of These

Most Americans don't get enough dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium, and iron in their diets. Eating enough of these nutrients can improve your health and help reduce the risk of some diseases and conditions. For example, getting enough calcium may reduce the risk of osteoporosis, a condition that results in brittle bones as one ages. Eating a diet high in dietary fiber promotes healthy bowel function. Additionally, a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, and grain products that contain dietary fiber, particularly soluble fiber, and low in saturated fat and cholesterol may reduce the risk of heart disease.

**Remember: You can use the Nutrition Facts label not only to help limit those nutrients you want to cut back on but also to increase those nutrients you need to consume in greater amounts.**

## The Percent Daily Value (%DV):

The % Daily Values (%DVs) are based on the Daily Value recommendations for key nutrients but only for a 2,000 calorie daily diet--not 2,500 calories. You, like most people, may not know how many calories you consume in a day. But you can still use the %DV as a frame of reference whether or not you consume more or less than 2,000 calories. The %DV helps you determine if a serving of food is high or low in a nutrient. Note: a few nutrients, like *trans* fat, do not have a %DV.

Do you need to know how to calculate percentages to use the %DV? No, the label (the %DV) does the math for you. It helps you interpret the numbers (grams and milligrams) by putting them all on the same scale for the day (0-100%DV). The %DV column doesn't add up vertically to 100%. Instead each nutrient is based on 100% of the daily requirements for that nutrient (for a 2,000 calorie diet). This way you can tell high from low and know which nutrients contribute a lot, or a little, to your **daily** recommended allowance (upper or lower).

### Quick Guide to %DV:

#### **5%DV or less is low and 20%DV or more is high**

This guide tells you that **5%DV or less is low** for all nutrients, those you want to limit (e.g., fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium), or for those that you want to consume in greater amounts (fiber, calcium, etc). As the **Quick Guide** shows, **20%DV or more is high** for all nutrients.

*Example:* If the amount of Total Fat in one serving listed is 18%DV, is that contributing a lot or a little to your fat limit of 100% DV? Check the **Quick Guide to %DV**. 18%DV, which is below 20%DV, is not yet high, but what if you ate two servings? You would double that amount, eating 36% of your daily allowance for Total Fat. Coming from just one food, that amount leaves you with 64% of your fat allowance ( $100\% - 36\% = 64\%$ ) for *all* of the other foods you eat that day, snacks and drinks included.

Using the %DV for:

**Comparisons:** The %DV also makes it easy for you to make comparisons. You can compare one product or brand to a similar product. Just make sure the serving sizes are similar, especially the weight (e.g. gram, milligram, ounces) of each product. It's easy to see which foods are higher or lower in nutrients because the serving sizes are generally consistent for similar types of foods, except in a few cases like cereals.

**Nutrient Content Claims:** Use the %DV to help you quickly distinguish one claim from another, such as "reduced fat" vs. "light" or "nonfat." Just compare the %DVs for Total Fat in each food product to see which one is higher or lower in that nutrient--**there is no need to memorize definitions**. This works when comparing all nutrient content claims, e.g., less, light, low, free, more, high, etc.

**Dietary Trade-Offs:** You can **use the %DV to help you make dietary trade-offs** with other foods throughout the day. You don't have to give up a favorite food to eat a healthy diet. When a food you like is high in fat, balance it with foods that are low in fat at other times of the day. Also, pay attention to how much you eat so that the **total** amount of fat for the day stays below 100%DV.

### **Nutrients Without a %DV: *Trans* Fats, Protein, and Sugars:**

Note that *Trans* fat, Sugars and, Protein do not list a %DV on the Nutrition Facts label.

**Trans Fat:** Experts could not provide a reference value for *trans* fat nor any other information that FDA believes is sufficient to establish a Daily Value or %DV. Scientific reports link *trans* fat (and saturated fat) with raising blood LDL ("bad") cholesterol levels, both of which increase your risk of coronary heart disease, a leading cause of death in the US.

**Important: Health experts recommend that you keep your intake of saturated fat, *trans* fat and cholesterol as low as possible as part of a nutritionally balanced diet.**

**Protein:** A %DV is required to be listed if a claim is made for protein, such as "high in protein". Otherwise, unless the food is meant for use by infants and children under 4 years old, none is needed. Current scientific evidence indicates that protein intake is not a public health concern for adults and children over 4 years of age.

**Sugars:** No daily reference value has been established for sugars because no recommendations have been made for the total amount to eat in a day. Keep in mind, the sugars listed on the Nutrition Facts label include naturally occurring sugars (like those in fruit and milk) as well as those added to a food or drink. Check the ingredient list for specifics on added sugars.