



Video Transcript: Understanding the Nutrition Facts Label

Learning how to understand and use the Nutrition Facts label can help you make healthier eating choices and identify nutrient-dense foods for a healthy diet.

Start with the serving information at the top. This part of the label shares the size of a single serving and the total number of servings in the container or package. This package holds 8 servings that are $\frac{2}{3}$ of a cup each. All nutrient information on the label, including the calories, refer to the amount found in one serving. Some packages can seem to hold a single serving but when you look closely at the label, you notice that they contain multiple servings.

Next, check total calories per serving and container. Pay attention to the calories per serving and how many calories you're consuming if you eat the whole package. If you double the servings you eat, you double the calories and nutrients.

If you eat this entire package, you will have eaten 1,840 calories. The information shown in the label is based on a diet of 2,000 calories a day. If you need 2,000 calories for the whole day, and you've just consumed 1,840 calories, you have 160 calories left – roughly the calories in 2 boiled eggs. Everyone doesn't need 2,000 calories; you may need less or more than 2,000 depending upon your age, gender, and activity level.

The next section of information on a nutrition label is about the amounts of specific nutrients in the product. Check key nutrients and understand what you're looking for. You may choose to limit certain nutrients such as sugars or fats. Keep in mind that some fats are healthy, and fat is a necessary nutrient. Total sugars includes both naturally occurring and added sugars. As you look at the label, consider the amounts of added sugars, saturated fat, and sodium you eat, and avoid trans fat. When choosing among different brands or similar products, compare labels and choose foods with less of these nutrients when possible.

We also need to get enough of the beneficial nutrients. Only levels of vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium are required to be on the label. However, it's important to make sure you also get enough choline, dietary fiber, magnesium, and vitamins A, C, and E.*

It's important to understand Percent Daily Value (% DV). The Percent Daily Value tells you the percentage of each nutrient in a single serving, in terms of the daily recommended amount. If you want to consume less of a nutrient (such as saturated fat or sodium), choose foods with a lower Percent Daily Value (5 percent or less). If you want to consume more of a nutrient (such as fiber), choose foods with a higher Percent Daily Value (20 percent or more).