



EATING 101 RU DINING HEALTHY?



A WEEKLY NEWSLETTER BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE RU HEALTHY DINING TEAM

A Joint Program Between Rutgers Dining Services and The New Jersey Institute for Food, Nutrition, and Health

Diet Detective: Decoding Nutrition Facts Labels

Here is some food for thought: they say, “You are what you eat,” but do you *know* what you are eating? Nutrition facts labels hold the key, but understanding what they mean can feel like deciphering a secret message. These labels help students make informed dietary choices and recognize how their food contributes to their daily nutrition.

Updated in January 2020, the Nutrition Facts label emphasizes calories, realistic serving sizes, and daily value percentages. Read below to magnify your knowledge and crack the case of your nutrition!

1 **Calories** provide a measure of energy in one serving of food. You can find this in the large, bolded number on the label.

3 To reduce your risk of chronic diseases, aim to limit your intake of saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium. **Less than 10% of calories per day should come from saturated fat and less than 2,300 mg per day from sodium.**

5 The nutrient facts label provides the percent Daily Value (DV) for fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium. Since many people do not consume enough of these essential nutrients, look for foods with 20% DV or more per serving to boost your intake. **The guide for Daily Value percentages is that 5% or less is low, while 20% or more is high.**

2 **Pay attention to the serving size and how many servings are included.** The label has serving sizes that realistically reflect what people consume. Keep in mind that if you eat or drink two servings, the calories and nutrient amounts are doubled.

4 The amount of **“Added sugars” added during processing** is required on the label. Added sugars should be **less than 10% of your daily calorie intake.** Sugar can hide behind many aliases, including table sugar, high fructose corn syrup, and cane syrup.

6 The %DV in the **footnote** is based on a 2,000-calorie diet, but this guideline is not for everyone and can vary based on age, gender, height, weight, and activity level.

| Nutrition Facts | |
|--|----------------|
| 8 servings per container | |
| Serving size 2/3 cup (55g) | |
| Amount per serving | |
| Calories 230 | |
| | % Daily Value* |
| Total Fat 8g | 10% |
| Saturated Fat 1g | 5% |
| Trans Fat 0g | |
| Cholesterol 0mg | 0% |
| Sodium 160mg | 7% |
| Total Carbohydrate 37g | 13% |
| Dietary Fiber 4g | 14% |
| Total Sugars 12g | |
| Includes 10g Added Sugars | 20% |
| Protein 3g | |
| Vitamin D 2mcg | 10% |
| Calcium 260mg | 20% |
| Iron 8mg | 45% |
| Potassium 235mg | 6% |
| *The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice. | |

Your Cheat Sheet to Good Eats.

Revised by: Carys Neill

Reviewed By: Dr. Peggy Policastro, RDN-Dining Services/IFNH

References: *Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025*. Available at: <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/resources/2020-2025-dietary-guidelines-online-materials>. Accessed on November 11, 2024. *Changes to the Nutrition Facts Label*. Available at:

<https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-food-labeling-and-critical-foods/changes-nutrition-facts-label> Accessed on November 13, 2024. *What's on the Nutrition Facts Label?* Available at: <https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/whats-nutrition-facts-label>. Accessed on November 11, 2024.