

# UNDERSTANDING FOOD LABELS

For more information visit <http://www.fda.gov/> and search “Food Labeling”

## What can I use the Nutrition Facts label for?

- Getting a general idea about how healthy a food is.
- Figuring out what counts as one serving and how many calories are in each serving.
- Comparing two similar products to choose the healthiest option.

## Watch out for these common misconceptions:

- Assuming “sugar-free” or “fat-free” means a product is low calorie or healthy; it’s not true!
- Buying something because it says “organic,” “natural,” “multigrain,” or has some other “healthy” claim. These statements do not necessarily mean a product is good for you.
- Assuming that a package or bottle is only one serving. Many beverage bottles and packages of chips, cookies, and candy are actually 2 or 3 servings!

### START HERE

Start by checking what counts as one serving size and how many servings there are per package.

**CHECK CALORIES**  
How many calories would you eat if you ate a whole package?  
Multiply the number of “servings per container” by the “calories.”

**Know Your Fats and Reduce Your Sodium**  
Aim to eat only small amounts of saturated fat and cholesterol. Keep *trans* fat to 0. Limit your sodium by choosing foods with less sodium.

**GET ENOUGH OF THESE NUTRIENTS**  
Aim to get enough fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Servings Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 3g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 30mg	10%
<b>Sodium</b> 470mg	20%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
<b>Protein</b> 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
Iron	4%

**QUICK GUIDE TO % DAILY VALUE**  
5% or less is Low,  
20% or more is High.  
Use the % Daily Value to compare similar foods and choose the healthiest option.

This resource is adapted from Let’s Go! materials. [www.letsgo.org](http://www.letsgo.org).



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