



# Dietitian's Dish

September 2021

## Nutrition Label: Your Link to Better Health

A new trend has emerged with health and wellbeing at the forefront: food transparency. Consumers want more in-depth information regarding their food. According to a 2020 report from the Food Industry Association and Lab Insight, transparency is important to 81% of shoppers, up from 69% in 2018. The Nutrition Facts label provides key information the 2020 report identified as important to consumers

- A complete list of ingredients
- In-depth nutritional information

Nutrition information was not always required on packaged foods and beverages prior to 1990. With a recent revision, an updated label is required on products as of January 1, 2021. It can be difficult at times for consumers to access accurate product information. The Nutrition Facts label, regulated federally by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), remains one of the most reliable resources truly at the fingertips of consumers.

You can use the label to support your health goals. No matter if you're trying to better manage your blood sugars, reduce your cholesterol or increase your intake of protein, the label provides you all the details you need to make better choices!



### INGREDIENT LIST

The FDA requires a complete list of ingredients, listed in descending order by quantity.

A good rule of thumb, the first 3 ingredients make up the largest part of what you are eating. If the 3 first ingredients include refined grains, a type of sugar, or hydrogenated oils, you can assume that the product is unhealthy. Instead, try choosing items that have whole foods listed as the first three ingredients.

In addition, an ingredient list that is longer than two to three lines suggests that the product is highly processed.



**SEVEN HILLS**  
SENIOR LIVING  
*St. Paul*



## Nutrition Facts 101

**1 Serving Size:** Always start here. The information on the label reflects the serving size. Visualize the serving size: if you *double* the serving size, you also *double* the calories and all other nutrients.

**2 Calories:** Total calories are based on the stated serving size. Excess intake of calories can lead to weight gain. Use calories to compare products and identify what is worth your daily "calorie spend".

**3 Total Fat:** Total fat represents healthy and unhealthy fats. Saturated and trans fat are called out due to their negative impact on brain and heart health. The Dietary Guidelines recommends limiting saturated fat to  $\leq 10\%$  and  $\leq 1\%$  for trans fat of your daily calories.

**4 Cholesterol:** Foods high in cholesterol increase your risk for heart disease. The American Heart Association advises a daily limit to  $< 300$  milligrams.

**5 Sodium:** High sodium intake is linked to high blood pressure. Limit daily intake to 2300 mg. As a general guide: 5% of the daily value (DV) per serving is low, and  $\geq 20\%$  DV is high.

**6 Total Carbohydrates:** Total carbs include: carbs, fiber, and sugar. As our energy powerhouse, carbs are converted into glucose. Fiber helps manage blood sugar levels and can lower cholesterol. Aim for 35 gm of fiber per day. Balance carb intake by avoiding products high in sugar,

**7** especially added sugars which raise triglyceride levels and play a role in heart disease and diabetes. Go for  $< 10\%$  of your total daily calories from added sugar.

**8 Protein:** Protein is a major source of energy and building block for all our body systems. Choose protein foods that are lower in saturated fat.

**Vitamins and Minerals:** A few vitamins and minerals are highlighted due to their role in a healthy diet! Finally, an area where more is better, for most!

Nutrition labels are based on a daily 2,000 calorie diet. Depending on your age, gender and activity level, you may need to consume more or less than 2,000 calories per day, so keep this in mind when viewing each label.

## Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container  
Serving size 2/3 cup (55g)

Amount per serving  
**Calories 230**

% Daily Value\*

|                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Total Fat</b> 8g           | <b>10%</b> |
| Saturated Fat 1g              | 5%         |
| Trans Fat 0g                  |            |
| <b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg        | <b>0%</b>  |
| <b>Sodium</b> 160mg           | <b>7%</b>  |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g | <b>13%</b> |
| Dietary Fiber 4g              | 14%        |
| Total Sugars 12g              |            |
| Includes 10g Added Sugars     | 20%        |
| <b>Protein</b> 3g             |            |
| Vitamin D 2mcg                | 10%        |
| Calcium 260mg                 | 20%        |
| Iron 8mg                      | 45%        |
| Potassium 235mg               | 6%         |