

Deciphering Label Lingo!

When it comes to product claims, be a skeptic. Rather than trying to decipher the difference between “low fat,” “reduced fat,” and “light,” read the label. Many claims can be misleading. For example, snack foods such as potato chips are labeled “no cholesterol.” If you’re watching your cholesterol, you might think that’s a healthy buy. However, “no cholesterol” chips have large amounts of saturated fat that significantly raise cholesterol.

Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

Serving Size
All the nutritional information on the label is based on the serving size. Pay careful attention to the number of servings in the container and compare that to the amount you actually eat. For this example with macaroni and cheese, the nutritional facts are based on only 1/2 of the total amount in the container. Therefore, if you eat the

Nutrients
The nutrients listed first are ones you should limit (*total fat, cholesterol and sodium*). Eating too much of these can lead to medical complications such as heart disease and high blood pressure. *Dietary fiber, Vitamins A & C, Calcium and Iron* are nutrients that Americans don’t tend to eat enough of. These nutrients can improve your health and

Ingredients
The ingredients contained in the product are listed in descending order by weight.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1 cup (228g)	
Serving Per Container 2	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 250	Calories from Fat 110
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 31g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Sugars 5g	
Protein 5g	
Vitamin A	4%
Vitamin C	2%
Calcium	20%
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 & Calories from Fat
This section describes the number of calories contained in the serving size indicated and further breaks it down into calories from fat.

Sugars and Protein
There is no Percent Daily Value (%DV) for sugars because no recommendations for daily intake have been suggested. In addition, there is also no %DV for protein because current scientific evidence suggests that protein is not a major health concern for adults and children over 4.

% Daily Value
This section tells you how much the nutrients in the food item contribute to the recommended daily amount for each nutrient. For example, by eating 1 serving (1/2 package) of the macaroni and cheese, you would be getting 18% of the fat you should consume in one day. As indicated on the label, the percentages are based on a 2,000 calorie/day diet.

Don't be overwhelmed!

Focus on what's important to you and don't try to do too much at one time. If your goal is weight loss you need to focus on calories. Once you feel that your calorie intake is under control, you can make healthy changes in other areas.