

Label Reading

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Reading food labels is a good way to choose foods that are nutritious and desirable to help achieve our health goals. If you are not familiar with reading label, this resource can help guide you to make it easy to get started. This process can be a bit time consuming when starting, so aim to give yourself a little extra time to do your shopping as you try it out. As you continue to practice reading labels, this process will become easier to incorporate into your everyday grocery shopping habits.

There are 3 parts to label reading:

1. Front of Package Labeling:

Front of package (FOP) labels are often what we first see on a product on the front of the package. These are usually health claims by the product company to draw in consumers to purchase their products. FOP labels can be a great way to quickly skim the shelves to help you narrow down your choice in products as this type of labelling is most visible.

Examples of FOP labeling include: "Low in Sodium" "Low in Sugar" "High in Fibre" "100% Whole Wheat"

2. Nutrition Facts Label:

The Nutrition Facts label is a good way to look at specific nutrients you might be interested in, e.g. low sodium. It is also helpful in determining if the FOP claim is what you interpret it as or accurate.

It is important to take notice of the serving size on the label - this **servicing size** represents all of the nutritional value for the product. This serving size is not the recommended amount for this product, it only relates to the values on the label.

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Per 2 slices (65 g) pour 2 tranches (65 g)	
Calories 170	% Daily Value* % valeur quotidienne*
Fat / Lipides 3 g	4 %
Saturated / saturés 0.4 g	2 %
+ Trans / trans 0 g	
Carbohydrate / Glucides 29 g	
Fibre / Fibres 3 g	11 %
Sugars / Sucres 1 g	1 %
Protein / Protéines 6 g	
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium 200 mg	9 %
Potassium 125 mg	3 %
Calcium 20 mg	2 %
Iron / Fer 2 mg	11 %
Zinc 0.75 mg	7 %

A simple way to read this label is to use the **% Daily Value** (%DV) as a basis for all products. Unless you require specific amounts for your nutritional needs/limits, using the %DV makes reading this label simple and often helps to save time!

As indicated at the bottom of this label, the %DV is used for any one of the nutrients listed on the Nutrition Facts label and can be interpreted as:

- **5% or less is low** for that nutrient
- **15% or more is high** for that nutrient

A reminder to note the serving size - these percentages will change proportionally as the serving

3. Ingredients List:

The ingredients list can reveal the various food components within your product. It is also helpful to know that the ingredients are listed by weight, which means the first ingredient has the the largest amount within the product.

The ingredient list can also clarify the type of ingredients that make up the product, for example, a product with a front of package labeling "100% Whole Wheat" may or may not be made up of whole grain, it may also include some enriched (white) flour that is mixed into the product. In this case, we would want to see "Whole wheat whole grain" to ensure the product is made entirely from whole grains.

The ingredient list is also helpful in revealing any additive ingredients that might be important for food allergies/intolerances.