

Reading a food label

Teacher Information

Introduction

- Nutrition information panels and ingredient lists on food packaging provide a useful way to compare nutrition content of packaged foods.
- Learning how to use this information can help choose the healthiest options.
- Country of origin, manufacturers' information and date marking can also inform food choices.

Facts

- A food label must show the ingredients present, listed in descending order of their proportion by weight in the food.
- Food additives must also be included in the ingredients list. These may be listed by a class name, chemical name or a code number. Food additives include colours, flavours, antioxidants, preservatives and emulsifiers.
- The nutrition information panel must state a serving size and the servings per pack.
- Serving size is specified by the manufacturer and may not be the same as a serve in the *Australian Guide to Healthy Eating* or the amount consumed.

In practice

- The 'quantity per 100g' (or 100ml if liquid) information is handy to compare similar products with each other.
- The 'per serve' information is useful in estimating how much of a nutrient you would obtain eating the specified serve.

Learn more at: <http://www.foodstandards.gov.au/consumer/labelling/Pages/interactive-labelling-poster.aspx>



Refresh.ED



Department of
Health

child
health
Promotion Research Centre
Research for the Future

AUSTRALIA
ECU
EDITH COWAN
UNIVERSITY

Nutrition Information

Servings per package – 16
Serving size – 30g (2/3 cup)

	Per serve	Per 100g
Energy	432kJ	1441kJ
Protein	2.8g	9.3g
Fat		
Total	0.4g	1.2g
Saturated	0.1g	0.3g
Carbohydrate		
Total	18.9g	62.9g
Sugars	3.5g	11.8g
Fibre	6.4g	21.2g
Sodium	65mg	215mg

The following diagram provides some helpful tips for understanding and using nutrition information panels and ingredients lists.

Energy

- Check kJ per serve.
- 'Discretionary' or 'Sometimes' foods have 600kJ per serve.

100g Column and Serving Size

- Use the per 100g column to compare similar foods.
- Use the per serve column to calculate how much nutrient or energy you will eat. Also check if your portion size and the serve size are the same.

Total fat ▶

- Generally, choose less than 10g per 100g.
- For milk, yoghurt, icecream, choose less than 2g per 100g.
- For cheese, choose less than 15g per 100g.

Saturated fat ▶

- Choose the lowest per 100g.
- Less than 3g per 100g is best.

Other names for ingredients high in saturated fat: Animal fat/oil, beef fat, butter, chocolate, milk solids, coconut, coconut oil/milk/cream, copha, cream, ghee, dripping, lard, suet, palm oil, sour cream, vegetable shortening.

Carbohydrate

Sugars

- Choose less than 15g per 100g.
- If higher, check that sugar (or alternative names for added sugar) is not high in the ingredient list.

Other names for added sugar: Dextrose, fructose, glucose, golden syrup, honey, maple syrup, sucrose, malt, maltose, lactose, brown sugar, caster sugar, raw sugar, sucrose.

Ingredients: Cereals (76%) (wheat, oatbran, barley), psyllium husk (11%, sugar, rice, malt extract, honey, salt, vitamins.

Sodium (salt)

- Choose less than 400mg per 100g.
- Less than 120mg per 100g is best.

Other names for high salt ingredients: Baking powder, celery salt, garlic salt, meat/yeast extract, monosodium

glutamate, (MSG), onion salt, rock salt, sea salt, sodium, sodium ascorbate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium nitrate/nitrite, stock cubes, vegetable salt.

Ingredients ▲

- Listed from greatest to smallest by weight.
- Check first three for items high in saturated fat, sodium (salt) or added sugar.