# Know How To Read A Nutrition Label

You grab a package from the frozen foods and flip it over to scan its label.

The calories and fat numbers look good, you think. The cholesterol level seems okay.

But what about the daily value? Or the serving size? Or the nutrient value? Now the label looks like a foreign language.

The food label isn't a federal conspiracy against the public. It was actually designed so you could effectively and easily consume a healthy diet.

This information from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration will help you decipher any food label.

Serving Size: This is the first thing you'll see under the heading "Nutrition Facts." It is listed in units that you'll know like cups or pieces, followed by the metric amount (the number of grams).

Pay attention to the serving size, and then consider how many servings you are eating. Those three handfuls of chips could take the serving size through the roof!

Calories and Calories from Fat: The calories on the label show how much energy you get from a serving of this food. Calories from fat means how many calories in a single serving come from fat.

Note that the number of servings you eat determines the number of calories you consume.

The guide is based on a 2,000 calories a day diet. So 40 calories is low, 100 calories is moderate and 400 calories or more is high.

Nutrients: This part of the label can help you both limit and increase your nutrient intake. Nutrients such as fat, cholesterol and sodium are listed first, in yellow, and are items that people should limit.

Words in blue or below a black bar, such as vitamin A, C, calcium and iron, are items people are encouraged to consume.

You'll also see % Daily Value (%DV) in the right-hand column of the nutrients' section.

These percentages can help you determine which nutrients contribute to your daily recommended allowance.

The column doesn't add up vertically to 100 percent because each nutrient is based on 100 percent of the daily requirements for that nutrient.

Overall, 5 percent DV or less is low for all nutrients and 20 percent is high, whether you want to limit them (such as fat, saturated fat, cholesterol or sodium) or if you should eat more of them (such as fiber or calcium).

You can also use the %DV to compare similar brands or products. Just make sure the serving sizes and weights are similar.

Also use %DV to distinguish which among the "reduced fat," "light" or "nonfat" versions of something is better for you. To do this, compare the %DVs of total fat in each product to one another.

You'll also see that trans fats, sugars and proteins don't have a Daily Value or %DV. Here's why:

Trans fats: Experts didn't create a value for trans fat to establish a %DV. However, health experts recommend that you keep your intake of saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol as low as possible as part of a nutritionally balanced diet.

Proteins: The %DV for protein only has to be listed if the product is meant for children or infants, or if the product is touted as "high in protein."

Sugars: Sugar doesn't have a %DV because no recommendations have been made by the FDA about the total amount to eat in a day.

# Helpful Advice for Eating Right All Year Round

With holidays, vacations, and family celebrations seemingly upon us all year long, eating healthfully can sometimes be a challenge.

Eating right, even while on vacation, is a key step to staying healthy, looking great and most importantly, keeping ailments like diabetes in check.

Here are some tips from The National Diabetes Education Program for anyone interested in eating healthful meals while still enjoying the foods that every season has to offer.

At a buffet, start by scanning the table to see what is available. Fill up your plate with mostly vegetables and whole grains. If there are meat dishes, limit your portion to about the size and thickness of a deck of cards.

Choose lean meats, poultry or fish instead of high fat meats such as barbecued ribs. Choose grilled chicken (remove the skin) instead of something fried.

Look for high-fiber foods, such as dried beans and peas, lentils and dark green vegetables such as broccoli, cabbage, spinach and kale.

Dishes with green beans, three-beans, black beans and black-eyed peas are always good choices, as are whole grain foods such as brown rice, couscous, whole wheat bread and pasta.

Watch out for fatty foods. Avoid dishes with a lot of mayonnaise, sour cream and butter. Choose veggies that are light on dressing and cheese. For fun, try making your own dressing with a little olive oil and vinegar.

If you make a sandwich, use whole wheat bread with mustard or salsa instead of mayonnaise.

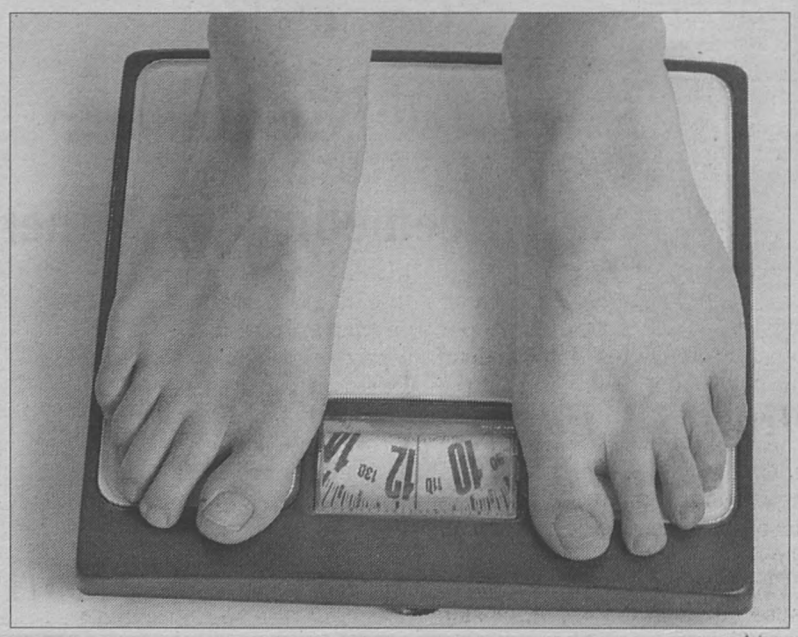
Try to drink water, unsweetened tea, or diet soda with your meal. If you choose to drink alcoholic beverages, drink only with a meal and do not drink more than one (for women) or two (for men) per day.

Don't forget dessert!

Dessert is a great opportunity to get in some of your daily fruit intake. Everyone - including people with diabetes - needs three to four servings of fruit a day. Fruit is an excellent source of fiber, vitamins and minerals, and has zero fat.

Those pies and cookies taste good, but have a lot of fat and cholesterol and not much nutrition. So, if you can't resist, have a small serving.

Focus on feeling better, eating healthy, and controlling any medical conditions, such as diabetes, for life. For more tips and free materials on diabetes control, visit the National Diabetes Education Program online at www.ndep.nih.gov, or call (800) 438-5383.



Jackson Studio
A positive Mind yields positive results

*Lose that holiday bulge*

Howard Jackson
PERSONAL TRAINER

Certification from Professional Fitness Instructor Training

Contact us @
713.517.3852
howardjackson@hotmail.com

Boot Camp Classes:
Tuesday, Thursday, & Friday @ 5-6AM
Tuesday & Thursday @ 5-6:30PM

Services offered: One on one, Sport specific, Fitness Consultations, Body composition, Fitness Testing