

# Reading a Nutrition Facts label

Almost all foods that come in packages have a Nutrition Facts label. Those labels tell you just about everything you need to know to make healthy food choices. So it's a good idea to learn to read them. Here's how.

## Start here

What you eat is important. But so is how much you eat. So start by looking here. You'll see that a serving size of this food is ½ cup. The label tells you the amount of nutrients and calories you would get for every ½ cup eaten. And there are 3.5 servings in this container. If you didn't know that and ate the whole can, you'd be getting 3.5 times the calories, fat, and everything else shown on the label! Talk with your diabetes care team about how much of each nutrient on the label you need every day.

## Calories

If you're trying to lose weight or even keep your weight the same, the number of calories you eat counts. To lose weight, you need to eat fewer calories than your body burns. Talk with your diabetes care team about how many calories you need each day. Then use this line to see if the food fits into your plan. You can read the Nutrition Facts labels to compare calorie counts of similar foods to find the lowest-calorie option.

## Total fat

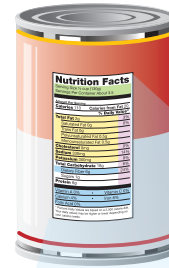
This line tells you how much fat is in a serving of this food. It includes fats that are good for you, such as mono- and polyunsaturated fats. It also includes fats that are not good for you, such as:

- Saturated fats
- Trans fats

Eating lower-fat foods more often may help with calorie control and keeping a healthy body weight. A low-fat food contains 3 grams or less of fat per serving.

## Sodium

Sodium does not affect your blood sugar. But many people eat more sodium than they need. Consuming no more than 2300 milligrams (1 teaspoon) a day is recommended.<sup>1</sup> Sodium comes in many forms. When we think of sodium sources, we often think first of table salt. But the fact is that many of the foods we eat contain sodium. Reading the label can help you compare the amount of sodium in different foods so that you can choose lower-sodium options.



<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
Serving Size ½ cup (130g)	
Servings Per Container About 3.5	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 110	<b>Calories from Fat</b> 20
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 2g	3%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 0.5g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg	0%
<b>Sodium</b> 330mg	14%
<b>Potassium</b> 300mg	9%
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 18g	6%
Dietary Fiber 6g	24%
Sugars 1g	
<b>Protein</b> 6g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 4%	Iron 8%
Folic Acid 0%	

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.

Talk with your diabetes care team about what to include in your meal plan.

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## Total carbohydrate

If you are counting carbs, this is a very important place to look. "Total carbohydrate" includes sugar, starches, and fiber.

## Fiber

Fiber is the part of plant foods that the body does not digest. Adults should aim to eat 25 to 30 grams of fiber a day.

## Sugars

Sugars raise blood sugar quickly. So it's important to be aware of foods with a lot of sugar. Avoid foods with added sugar.

## Protein

Protein is needed by the body. Protein helps you feel full, but it does not increase blood sugar. Most people don't get enough protein.

## % Daily Value

- 5% daily value or less means that the food is low in that nutrient
- 20% daily value or more means that the food is high in that nutrient

## Strike the right nutrient balance:

- Keep these low: saturated fats, trans fats, cholesterol, and sodium
- Get enough of these: potassium, fiber, vitamins A, D, and C, calcium, and iron

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For more information, visit [Cornerstones4Care.com](http://Cornerstones4Care.com)

**Reference: 1.** American Diabetes Association. Standards of medical care in diabetes—2019. *Diabetes Care*. 2019;42(suppl1):S1-S193.

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