

Wellness Services Today



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Food Labels: The Breakdown

As you eat your cereal in the morning, you notice it on the side of the box—that small, white rectangle with the jumble of words, numbers, and percentages. It is the nutrition facts label, and it breaks down what's inside the box—everything from calories to cholesterol. The label can be a little confusing, so the following outline should help give you a better understanding of basic nutrition facts. Knowing what's in your food can help you maintain a healthy diet.



SERVING SIZE

A serving size is the recommended amount of a food that should be eaten by one person. It is important to pay attention to the serving size because the item you're eating may contain several servings. This means that if you eat an entire bag of chips that contains three servings, you're really eating three times the calories, fat, etc., that are listed on the label.



CALORIES AND CALORIES FROM FAT

This number indicates the total number of calories and the number of calories which are derived from fat that are contained in one serving of food. You should aim for getting only about 30 percent of your daily calories from fat.



Cal from Fat : 90	
% Daily Value*	
	15%
g	25%

PERCENT DAILY VALUES

These percentages tell you how one serving of food fits nutritionally into a daily diet of 2,000 calories.

Total Carb	
Dietary Fiber 0	
Sugars 19g	
Protein 1g	
Vitamin A 0%	

NUTRIENT LIST AND AMOUNTS

Food companies must list, at a minimum, the amount of fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars, protein, vitamins A and C, calcium, and iron that are contained in one serving of a product. Some labels also display trans fats. The required nutrients were chosen because they relate to current health concerns, such as coronary artery disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and obesity. Your goal should be to consume no more than 100 percent of the daily value for fat, cholesterol, and sodium, and at least 100 percent of the daily values for vitamins A and C, iron, and calcium.

	Calo
Total Fat	Less Than
Sat Fat	Less Than
Cholesterol	Less Than
Sodium	Less Than
Total Carb	
Dietary Fiber	

PERCENT DAILY VALUES FOOTNOTE

This shows the maximum amounts of total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium, as well as target amounts for total carbohydrates and fiber, that should be consumed each day. This is based on a suggested diet of 2,000 calories. Keep in mind that necessary calorie amounts vary for each individual.

Reading food labels is a crucial part of maintaining healthy eating habits. It allows you to make informed choices about the foods you eat and compare the nutritional value of different foods. A good diet and an active lifestyle can help your body stay healthy and disease-free.

Sample Food Label

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size: 1 Cake (48g)			
Serving Per Container: 5			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories: 200	Cal from Fat : 90		
% Daily V alue*			
Total Fat 10	15%		
Saturated Fat 5 g	25%		
Trans Fat 0 g	0%		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%		
Sodium 100mg	4%		
Total Carbohydrate 26g	9%		
Dietary Fiber 0 g	0%		
Sugars 19g			
Protein 1g			
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%		
Calcium 0%	Iron 0%		
*Percent V alues are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your Daily V alues 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 Carb		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

This serving size is one cake, but five cakes come in the package. If you eat them all, you need to multiply all of the following nutrition facts by 5.

Fat should amount to no more than 30% of your daily calories. Based on a 2,000-calorie diet, this would equate to no more than 600 calories from fat for the entire day.

The following percentages represent how much this product counts toward the recommended daily amount. It is based on 2,000 calories.

While it's good that this product has no trans fat, it has significant saturated fat. Less than 10% of your daily calories should come from saturated fat—this product already provides a quarter of what you should consume in one day.

With 26g of carbohydrates, this product would not be a good choice if you were following a low-carb diet.

This product is quite high in sugar. While there is no FDA "recommended daily amount," the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggests staying below 32g a day—or 8 teaspoons.

Your goal should be to consume 100% of these vitamins and nutrients per day. This product would not be a good choice for helping to meet that goal.

Every food label attaches this information at the end. It is a summary of the recommended total amounts you should consume each day—based on either 2,000-calorie or 2,500-calorie diet.