

# How Do I Read Food Labels?

When you go grocery shopping, take time to read the nutrition labels on your purchases. Compare nutrients and calories in one food to those in another. The information may surprise you. You want to make sure that you aren't bringing home foods high in saturated fat and cholesterol!



One easy way to do “healthier” grocery shopping is to spend more time in the outer aisles of the store where fresh foods are kept. Spend less time in the middle aisles where packaged foods, snacks and soft drinks are stocked.



## How do I read the label?

\*Most foods in the grocery store must now have a nutrition label and list of ingredients.

\*Claims like “low cholesterol” and “fat free” can be used only if a food meets legal standards set by the government.

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- The “Nutrition Facts” label contains this information:

\*Serving Size — If you eat double the serving size listed, you need to double the calories, fat and nutrients. If you eat half the size shown, cut the calories and nutrients in half.

\*Calories — This is very helpful to know if you're cutting calories to lose weight.

\*Total Fat — Most people need to cut back on calories and fat! Too much fat may contribute to heart disease and cancer. The label gives you the number of grams of fat per serving (so you can track your daily intake) and the number of calories from fat. If you are overweight or trying to lose weight, your goal is an overall intake of no

more than 25 to 35 percent of your total calories from fat, with less than 7 percent as saturated fat and less than 1 percent as trans fat. You should keep track of the amount of calories you consume and the amount of calories you burn.

\*Saturated Fat — This is one part of the total fat in food. It's a key nutrient for raising your blood cholesterol and your risk of heart disease and stroke. Eat less saturated fat!

\*Cholesterol — Too much of it in your diet may lead to too much of it in your blood. And too much cholesterol in your blood can lead to heart disease and stroke. It's best to eat less than 300 mg each day. People with heart disease, high LDL cholesterol levels or who are taking cholesterol medication should consume less than 200 mg of cholesterol per day.

\*Sodium — Watch for both natural and added sodium. Ordinary table salt is sodium chloride — 40 percent sodium by weight. Healthy adults should take in less than

2,300 mg of sodium each day. That's equal to about 1 tsp. of salt. Some people — African Americans, middle-aged and older adults, and people with high blood pressure — need less than 1,500 mg per day.

\*Total Carbohydrate — Emphasize fruits and vegetables, and whole-grain breads and cereals.

\*Dietary Fiber — Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, peas and beans are good sources and can help reduce the risk of heart disease.

\*Protein — Where there's animal protein, there's also fat and cholesterol. Eat small portions.

\*Vitamins and Minerals — Eating a variety of foods will help you reach your daily goal of 100 percent of vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron.

\*Daily Value — The daily values are guides for people who eat 2,000 calories each day. If you eat more or less than that, your daily value may be higher or lower. Choose foods with a low % daily value of fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium. Try to reach 100 percent of the daily value of total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, vitamins and minerals.

# **Top 10 Ways to Control Portions**

Ask anyone who has achieved long-term weight loss how they did it and they're sure to mention portion control. In fact, it can make or break your weight loss efforts. Learn how to size up servings and avoid overeating with the Top 10 Ways to Control Portions.

## **1. Break Leftovers Down**

Instead of using one large container to store leftovers such as casseroles, side dishes, or pasta, why not separate them into individually-sized containers? That way, when you reach in the fridge to find something to reheat, you're retrieving just enough for one helping. Breaking down meal-sized servings into single servings will help you limit your food intake with no additional effort.

## **2. Say Yes to Salads**

Eating a salad before lunch or dinner is a sure-fire way to keep from overeating. It will help curb your appetite and give you a sense of satiety sooner. Of course, we're not talking a little bit of iceberg lettuce here. To reap full portion control benefits from rabbit food, load up your salad with veggies or even lean meat like turkey cubes. The fiber in the veggies will help you feel fuller and lean meat's protein will give you an instant energy boost.

## **3. Single out Trigger Foods**

Buy snack foods in single serving sizes or divvy up full size packages into smaller, individual bags. It may be difficult to stop eating, oh, say, tortilla chips (My biggest weakness!) straight out of the bag while watching *Desperate Housewives*, but am I as likely to inhale the contents of 12 zipper bags without some forethought? Doubtful.

## **4. Master Mini Meals**

You can make sure your blood sugar stays at an even keel and keep hunger at bay by eating healthful small meals throughout the day. My friend Jenn has maintained a 30 pound weight loss for three years and is in such great shape, she became an aerobics instructor! She swears by mini meals to maintain her weight and keep her energy level up. Mini meals are by far the best way to prevent overeating because you'll get never *too* hungry and lose control of your portion intake.

## **5. Keep Seconds Out of Sight**

Don't serve family meals family-style. Keep pots and dishes away from the table where it's all too easy to go for seconds. I can't tell you how many times I've rethought my second helpings as I've made my way from the table to the stovetop. I've often told myself to sit back down and wait it out. Remember, it takes about 20 minutes to feel satiated. By giving myself that "breather" I've realized I wasn't hungry enough for another helping after all.

## **6. Make Meat a Side Dish**

Treat meat or meat-based entrees as a side dish rather than the main part of your meal. By loading up on veggies and healthy grains as the bulk of your meal instead of using them as sides, you'll feel full sooner and get extra vitamins and fiber. Experiment with new vegetables and preparation methods to keep things interesting.

## **7. Meet Yourself Halfway**

Make lunch a two-fer. Your mid-day meal can work double duty by being shared or serving as dinner. At work, why not split take out with a buddy? At a restaurant, pack up half of your meal before you even start eating: *Voila!* You have an instant dinner!

## **8. Be a Kid at Heart (or Tummy?)**

Order a kid's size meal when you go to fast food places to automatically control portions (and save money!). Don't be embarrassed about asking for a child's meal. It's really no big deal. I've even got a trick for places that have a "12 and under sign" -- I order it to go and then plop right down in the dining room, eat my meal, and give the toy to a kid sitting nearby!

## **9. Serving Standards**

Learn to "eyeball" standard portion sizes and stick to them when dining out or dishing up meals. Keep these tips in mind: 3 oz. of meat is the size of a deck of cards or an audio tape; 1 oz. of meat is the size of a matchbook; 1 cup of potatoes, rice or pasta looks like a tennis ball.

## **10. Treat Yourself**

And last, but not least ... indulge!

Treating yourself once in a while to a "forbidden" food will keep you from feeling deprived; a sense of deprivation can easily lead to overeating. Stop a binge before it starts by indulging every now and then.

# Portion Quiz

1) Standard serving of potato chips is 1 ounce - how many chips is that?  
10 or 20

2) A serving of meat is about the size of?  
Computer mouse or deck of cards

3) A serving of \_\_\_\_\_ is about the size of a computer mouse?  
Pasta or potato

4) A serving of pasta is about the size of?  
Softball or Scoop of Ice Cream

5) A serving of breakfast cereal is?  
One Cup or Half Cup

## Coffee

20 years ago an 8 ounce cup of coffee with whole milk and sugar was 45 calories.

Today a typical coffee is a 16 ounce Mocha, how many calories are in this?

Now how long will it take you to walk off those extra calories?

2 hours & 15 min.                      3 hours                      1 hour & 20 min

## Muffins

20 years ago a blueberry muffin was 1.5 ounces and 210 calories.

Today a blueberry is typically 5 ounces, how many calories are in this?

Now how long will you have to vacuum in order to burn those extra calories?

30 minutes                                      2 hours                                      1 hour & 30 min

## Pizza

20 years ago 2 slices of pepperoni pizza were 500 calories.

Today 2 large pepperoni slices are how many calories?

Now how long would you have to golf to burn those extra calories?

## Chicken Caesar Salad

20 years ago 1 ½ cups of salad was 390 calories.

Today a chicken Caesar salad is 3 cups, how many calories?

Now how long will you have to walk the dog in order to burn those calories?

1 hour & 20 min.                                      2 hours                                      3 hours

## Cheesecake

20 years ago a slice of cheesecake was 3 ounces and 260 calories.

Today how many calories are in the Super Sized slice you would receive?

Now how long would you have to play tennis to burn those calories?

55 minutes                                      3 hours                                      20 minutes