

# READING NUTRITION LABELS



Nutrition labeling is the nutrition information that is provided on all packaged foods in Canada. It allows consumers to compare products and make informed decisions about the foods they are purchasing by reviewing the nutritional content.

Understanding the nutrition label is the first step in ensuring that we are making healthy food choices for the children and youth at the breakfast club.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b>	
<b>Valeur nutritive</b>	
Per 1/6 (100g) / pour 1/6 (100g)	
Amount	% Daily Value
Teneur	% valeur quotidienne
<b>Calories / Calories</b> 290	
<b>Fat / Lipides</b> 15 g	<b>23 %</b>
Saturated / saturés 7 g	<b>34 %</b>
+ Trans / trans 0.1 g	
<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol</b> 0 mg	
<b>Sodium / Sodium</b> 190 mg	<b>8 %</b>
<b>Carbohydrate / Glucides</b> 37 g	<b>12 %</b>
Fibre / Fibres 1 g	<b>6 %</b>
Sugars / Sucres 16 g	
<b>Protein / Protéines</b> 4 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	6 %
Iron / Fer	8 %
<b>Ingredients:</b> Whole wheat, vegetable oil, shortening, salt.	
LOW FAT, GOOD SOURCE OF FIBER	

The nutrition label contains three key areas of information, which will be explained in more detail on the following pages:

## 1) NUTRITION FACTS TABLE (ORANGE)

- PROVIDES INFORMATION ON THE FOLLOWING:
  - Serving size
  - Calories
  - 13 core nutrients
  - % Daily Value: percentage of the Recommended Daily Intake (RDI) of that nutrient in the serving size indicated

## 2) LIST OF INGREDIENTS (BLUE)

- All ingredients in a food or beverage are listed in order by weight, from most to least.

## 3) NUTRITION CLAIMS (RED)

- NUTRIENT CONTENT CLAIMS
  - e.g. "no sugar added", "low fat", "good source of fiber"
- HEALTH CLAIMS
  - e.g. "a healthy diet low in sodium and high in potassium reduces the risk of high blood pressure"

DID  
YOU  
KNOW?

Not all foods require a nutrition label. Exemptions include:

- Fresh fruits and vegetables
- Raw fish and poultry (except when ground)
- Food prepared at the store (bakery items and salads)
- Foods that contain little nutrients (coffee, tea and spices)



# % DAILY VALUE

The % Daily Value is based on a 2000 calories/day diet. It is used to:

- Compare and evaluate the nutrient content of foods quickly.
- Inform the consumer if a specific amount of food has a little or a lot of a nutrient.
- Help consumers choose products that are higher in the nutrients they want more of and lower in nutrients they want less of.

<b>Nutrition Facts</b> <b>Valeur nutritive</b>	
Per 1/6 (100g) / pour 1/6 (100g)	
Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
<b>Calories / Calories</b> 280	
<b>Fat / Lipides</b> 15 g	<b>23 %</b>
Saturated / saturés 7 g + Trans / trans 0 g	<b>34 %</b>
<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol</b> 0 mg	
<b>Sodium / Sodium</b> 180 mg	<b>8 %</b>
<b>Carbohydrate / Glucides</b> 33 g	<b>11 %</b>
Fibre / Fibres 1 g	<b>5 %</b>
Sugars / Sucres 14 g	
<b>Protein / Protéines</b> 3 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	2 %
Iron / Fer	8 %

<b>Nutrition Facts</b> <b>Valeur nutritive</b>	
Per 1/6 (100g) / pour 1/6 (100g)	
Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
<b>Calories / Calories</b> 310	
<b>Fat / Lipides</b> 16 g	<b>25 %</b>
Saturated / saturés 8 g + Trans / trans 0.2 g	<b>40 %</b>
<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol</b> 15 mg	
<b>Sodium / Sodium</b> 190 mg	<b>8 %</b>
<b>Carbohydrate / Glucides</b> 38 g	<b>13 %</b>
Fibre / Fibres 1 g	<b>4 %</b>
Sugars / Sucres 20 g	
<b>Protein / Protéines</b> 4 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
Calcium / Calcium	2 %
Iron / Fer	8 %



## BRIGHT IDEAS

As a rule of thumb, remember the following numbers:

**5% or less is a little and 15% or more is a lot.**



# 13 CORE NUTRIENTS ON LABEL

## TOTAL FAT

Fat is an essential nutrient that has many different roles in the health of the body. People need fat to provide calories for energy, transport vitamins, assist with growth and development, and cushion the skin, bone and internal organs. If too much fat is eaten, or too much of certain kinds of fat, such as saturated or trans fats, the risk of developing certain types of diseases increases. There are three types of fat that add up to the total fat amount listed on the nutrition facts table including:

## 1 SATURATED FAT

- Saturated fat is most often found in animal products such as meat, cheese, whole milk, eggs, butter and lard, and fats such as shortening, coconut oil and palm oil.
- It is recommended to consume saturated fat in moderation.
- If you are concerned with saturated fat consumption at your breakfast club, please avoid the following:
  - Bacon;
  - Sausage and other high fat meats;
  - Large quantities of high fat cheese;
  - Over-use of lard in cooking and baking;
  - Over-consumption of processed foods.

## 2 TRANS FAT

- Trans fats were created to offer consumers more convenience and shelf-stable food products.
- It is highly recommended to avoid hydrogenated products, as they have been linked to numerous diseases. Evidence shows that trans fat raises LDL cholesterol levels and lowers HDL cholesterol levels, which increases risk of heart disease.
- Trans fat is found in fried foods and bakery products made with hard block margarine and shortening, such as cakes, cookies, crackers, pastries, doughnuts, muffins, french fries, fried chicken, potato chips and other snack foods.

## 3 UNSATURATED FAT

- *Canada's Food Guide* recommends a small amount (2-3 tablespoons) of unsaturated fat a day.
- Replacing saturated and trans fat with unsaturated fats, like monounsaturated fat and polyunsaturated fat, will help lower cholesterol levels and reduce the risk of developing heart disease.
- Mono-unsaturated fat is found in olive oil, canola oil, avocado, nuts and seeds.
- Polyunsaturated fat is found in nuts, seeds, fatty fish like herring, mackerel, salmon and trout, and oils such as corn, flaxseed, soybean and sunflower.
- Omega-3 fatty acids are a popular type of polyunsaturated fat that aid in brain function and heart health, among many other things.

# 4

## CHOLESTEROL

- Cholesterol is essential for many important functions in the human body.
- It is important to know that the main source of cholesterol is from our liver. It makes 800-1500 mg of cholesterol per day. The Daily Value for cholesterol from food is 300 mg/day. It is important to keep your cholesterol levels in a normal range.
- Animal-derived foods contain cholesterol, especially egg yolks, organ meat, and some seafood.

# 5

## SODIUM

- Most sodium comes from sodium chloride, which is also known as table salt. Salt is a common ingredient found in packaged foods such as canned foods and processed meat.
- A healthy diet containing foods high in potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a risk factor for stroke and heart disease.
- To avoid too much sodium at your breakfast club, do not use salt when cooking, do not provide a salt shaker to students, and cook/bake from scratch as often as possible rather than serving packaged, processed foods.
- A great alternative to using table salt is adding herbs and spices.

# 6

## CARBOHYDRATES

Carbohydrates are your body's main source of energy and calories. The 3 different types of carbohydrates are starches, sugars, and fiber. When consumed, both starches and sugars will break down into glucose in the blood. Glucose is the body's energy source for all activities and it impacts blood sugar levels. It is important to keep blood glucose levels stable.

# 7

## SIMPLE CARBOHYDRATES (SUGARS)

- Sugars release glucose quickly into the blood for instant energy. They can be found naturally in foods and can be added to foods.
- Examples of naturally occurring sugars include fruit, vegetables and milk. They are always accompanied by other nutrients (e.g. vitamins, fiber) which help to regulate blood sugar and metabolize the sugar so it can be used for fuel by the body.
- The most common examples of added sugars are white table sugar and corn syrup. These sugars are empty calories, which means they do not contain any nutrients for proper blood sugar regulation or assimilation by the body. It is recommended you check the ingredient list to avoid these added sugars.
- Common breakfast foods that contain added sugars include:
  - Sweetened fruit juice;
  - Cereals;
  - Granola bars;
  - Baked goods.

# 8

## COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES (STARCHES AND FIBER)

- Complex carbohydrates release sugars steadily into the blood stream for a constant source of energy. Consuming adequate amounts of complex carbohydrates promotes a long-lasting feeling of fullness and satisfaction.
- Starch is a complex carbohydrate that is not shown on the nutrition facts table. It is found naturally in plants; for example, from grains (wheat or rice), root crops (yams and potatoes), and in legumes (peas and beans). In contrast to the digestion of simple sugars, the body will gradually break down starch and the release of glucose in to the blood for energy is slower.
- Dietary fiber is a component of plant foods that human enzymes are unable to digest. Fiber stabilizes blood sugar, aids in regular bowel movements and promotes normal cholesterol levels.
- Common breakfast foods that contain fiber include:
  - Oatmeal;
  - Whole wheat bread, bagels, english muffins;
  - Fruit and vegetables;
  - Whole grain cereal .
- Starches and fiber are essential to breakfast. Starches provide a supply of physical and mental fuel to facilitate learning. Fiber slows absorption and helps you feel full for longer. Fiber also results in smaller spikes in blood sugar after eating a carbohydrate meal.

# 9

## PROTEIN

- Protein is found in many foods such as beans, legumes, nuts and seeds, milk products, eggs, fish, poultry and meat.
- Protein is a vital substance in all cells. It promotes optimal growth and development, and it is used to help build and repair tissues.

# 10

## VITAMIN A

- The role of vitamin A is to maintain healthy skin and eyes.
- Common food sources are yellow and orange fruits and vegetable (e.g. carrots, squash), and dark leafy greens.

# 11

## VITAMIN C

- Vitamin C helps to build and maintain connective tissues, heal wounds, and fight infections.
- Common food sources include citrus fruits, strawberries and bell peppers.

# 12

## CALCIUM

- Calcium helps to build healthy bones and teeth.
- Common food sources are milk, calcium fortified beverages, yogurt, cheese, almonds, sesame seeds, whole grain bread, some leafy greens and broccoli.

# 13<sup>IRON</sup>

- Iron helps to produce red blood cells that carry oxygen throughout the body; sufficient iron helps to prevent fatigue
- Common food sources are red meat, fish, poultry, whole grain bread, dark greens (e.g. broccoli) and raisins

## IMPORTANT

REFER TO YOUR PROVINCES OR TERRITORY'S SCHOOL NUTRITION POLICY OR GUIDELINES FOR POSSIBLE LIMITS AND RESTRICTIONS ON THE AMOUNT OF EACH OF THE 13 NUTRIENTS THAT SHOULD BE FOUND IN EACH SERVING. FOR EXAMPLE, SOME PROVINCES/TERRITORIES MAY LIMIT THE AMOUNT OF SODIUM AND RECOMMEND GRAMS OF FIBER PER SERVING.



# LIST OF INGREDIENTS

## Nutrition Facts Valeur nutritive

Per 1/6 (100g) / pour 1/6 (100g)

Amount Teneur	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
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<b>Calories / Calories</b> 290	
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<b>Fat / Lipides</b> 15 g	<b>23 %</b>
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Saturated / saturés 7 g	<b>34 %</b>
+ Trans / trans 0.1 g	

<b>Cholesterol / Cholestérol</b> 0 mg	
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<b>Sodium / Sodium</b> 190 mg	<b>8 %</b>
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<b>Carbohydrate / Glucides</b> 37 g	<b>12 %</b>
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Fibre / Fibres 1 g	<b>6 %</b>
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Sugars / Sucres 16 g	
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<b>Protein / Protéines</b> 4 g	
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Vitamin A / Vitamine A	0 %
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Vitamin C / Vitamine C	0 %
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Calcium / Calcium	6 %
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Iron / Fer	8 %
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**Ingredients:** Whole wheat, vegetable oil, shortening, salt.

LOW FAT, GOOD SOURCE OF FIBER

- Read the ingredient list to determine the contents of a food or beverage in order to make informed decisions.
- The ingredient list helps consumers identify specific sources of nutrients and to avoid specific ingredients and known allergens.
- All of the ingredients are listed on the nutrition label in descending order by weight. This means that the food or beverage contains more of the ingredients at the beginning of the list and less of the ingredients at the end of the list.
- Avoid the food or beverage if an undesirable ingredient is listed in the first 3 ingredients such as enriched wheat flour, hydrogenated oil, salt, or sugar.

There may be some items on the ingredient list that are not familiar. Sometimes nutrients can appear on an ingredient list under many different names. For example:

### SATURATED FAT

- Hydrogenated fats and oils
- Lard

### TRANS FAT

- Hydrogenated fats and oils
- Partially hydrogenated fats and oils
- Shortening

### SODIUM

- Celery, garlic or onion salt
- Disodium phosphate
- Monosodium glutamate (MSG)

### SUGAR

- Dextrose
- Evaporated cane juice
- Glucose-fructose
- High fructose corn syrup
- Hint: Words ending in "ose" are likely sugars

# NUTRITION CLAIMS

Nutrition claims apply to all foods, both packaged and non packaged, and are used to highlight a feature of interest for consumers. There are 2 types of nutrition claims including:

## IMPORTANT

Other types of claims have also appeared on front-of-package labelling. They include broad "healthy for you" or "healthy choice" claims as well as symbols and logos. These claims are not developed by the government. Instead, they are developed by third parties or corporations. While it is required that the information be truthful and not misleading, consumers should not rely only on general health claims to make informed food choices.

## 1) NUTRIENT CONTENT CLAIMS

- A nutrient content claim describes the amount of a nutrient in a food
- They can help consumers choose foods that contain a nutrient they may want more of
  - E.g. Source - such as *source of fibre*
- They can also help consumers choose foods that contain a nutrient they may want less of
  - E.g. Free - such as *sodium free or trans fat free*
  - E.g. Low - such as *low fat*

### ADDITIONAL EXAMPLES OF NUTRITION CLAIMS INCLUDE:

- **Good Source of Fiber:** Contains at least 2 grams of dietary fiber in the amount of food specified in the Nutrition Facts Table
- **Low Fat:** "Low" is associated with a small amount. Low fat means the food contains no more than 3 grams of fat in the amount of food specified in the Nutrition Facts Table
- **Cholesterol-free:** Less than 2 mg of cholesterol in the amount of food specified in the Nutrition Facts Table and low in saturated and trans fat
- **Sodium-free:** Less than 5 mg of sodium in the amount of food specified in the Nutrition Facts Table
- **Light:** "Light" is allowed only on foods that are either "reduced in fat" or "reduced in energy" (calories)

## 2) HEALTH CLAIMS

- Health claims are statements about the helpful effects of a certain food consumed within a healthy diet on a person's health.
- For example, "a healthy diet low in sodium and high in potassium reduces the risk of high blood pressure."
- A health claim can help consumers choose foods that they may want to include as part of a healthy diet to reduce risk of chronic diseases.