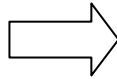


## Food Labels

Read the “Nutrition Facts” chart located on the majority of the food we purchase. It looks something like this:

Tips to help you make better food choices.



Remember that the values given in all categories are based on the serving size listed so be very aware of this when comparing products.

How many **calories** in one serving? – Look under calories or energy. Be aware of how many calories you require each day to maintain a healthy weight.

**Fat** – Total Fat is always listed. Usually saturated fat and trans fat are listed as well. The saturated fat should be less than 5 g; trans fat should be nothing but 0g. These fats are the “unfavorable fats”.... Limit these! A better choice of fats is unsaturated. Unsaturated fat is sometimes missing on the label. To find out how much unsaturated fat you’re eating, perform this simple equation:

TOTAL FAT – SATURATED FAT = UNSATURATED FAT.

Unsaturated fat should be MORE than saturated fat!!

**Sodium/Potassium** – As a general rule, eating less sodium (salt) is best! If the potassium amount is higher than the sodium amount (per serving), it is a favorable product. However, potassium is sometimes left out on a label. If it is listed, a great ratio is 2:1 for potassium to sodium. Sodium should be less than 150 mg on the label for a lower sodium diet!

**Fibre** - You’re making good choices if you get more than 3 grams of total fibre per serving. Foods providing more than 6 grams are very high sources of fibre.

**Sugar** – Products with less than 8g of sugar per serving are considered better products.

**Protein** – Products with at least 5g of protein per serving is excellent for foods such as grains and dairy. Foods like eggs, meat, poultry, and fish are much higher than 5g. All of these are excellent sources of protein!

**IMPORTANT:** Be aware that you should always read the ingredient list. Ingredients are listed in order of WEIGHT. If sugar, salt or fat is listed as one of the first ingredients, put it back!

### Nutrition Facts

Per 1 cup (57 g)

| Amount                 | % Daily Value |
|------------------------|---------------|
| Calories 170           |               |
| Fat 5 g                | 3%            |
| Saturated 0.2 g        |               |
| + Trans 0 g            | 1%            |
| Cholesterol 0 mg       | 0%            |
| Sodium 130 mg          | 5%            |
| Potassium 260 mg       | 7%            |
| Carbohydrate 43 g      | 14%           |
| ▪ Fibre 12 g           | 47%           |
| ▪ Soluble Fibre 1 g    |               |
| ▪ Insoluble Fibre 11 g |               |
| Sugars 8 g             |               |
| Protein 5 g            |               |
| Vitamin A 0%           | Vitamin C 0%  |
| Calcium 2%             | Iron 10%      |
| Phosphorus 10%         |               |
| Magnesium 25%          |               |

# Nutrition Claims – Health Canada 2009 - 2010



Use **nutrition claims** to make informed food choices.

- The Government has rules in place that must be met before a nutrition claim can be made on a label or advertisement. The rules for nutrition claims apply to all foods, prepackaged and not prepackaged, no matter where they are sold.
- A manufacturer can choose whether or not to include nutrition claims on the label or in the advertisement of a food.
- Many products will have nutrition claims as these claims highlight a feature of interest to consumers.

## Examples of claims

### Source of Fibre

Manufacturers of food can highlight a product's nutrition features using claims such as "Source of fibre". "Source of fibre" means the food contains at least 2 grams of dietary fibre in the amount of food specified in the Nutrition Facts table.

### Low Fat

"Low" is always associated with a very small amount. "Low fat" means that the food contains no more than 3 grams of fat in the amount of food specified in the Nutrition Facts table. In a healthy diet, the recommended range for fat intake is approximately one third of total Calories.

### Cholesterol-free

The claim "Cholesterol-free" means that the product has a negligible amount (less than 2 mg of cholesterol in the amount of food specified in the Nutrition Facts table) and it is also low in saturated fat and trans fat.

### Sodium-free

"Free" is an amount of a nutrient so small that health experts consider it nutritionally insignificant. A "sodium-free" claim means the amount of food specified in the Nutrition Facts table contains less than 5 mg of sodium.

### Reduced in Calories

"Reduced in Calories" has at least 25% less energy (Calories) than the food it is being compared to.

### Light

When referring to a nutritional characteristic of a product, "light" is allowed only on foods that are either "reduced in fat" or "reduced in energy" (Calories). "Light" can also be used to describe sensory characteristics of a food, provided that the characteristic is clearly identified with the claim (e.g., light tasting, light coloured).



## How do you use Nutrient Content Claims?

When you want to **decrease** the amount of certain nutrients, look for the following types of claims:

### Claims and what it means:

**Free** - None or hardly any of this nutrient (e.g., "Sodium-free")

**Low** - A small amount (e.g., "Low fat")

**Reduced** - At least 25% less of the nutrient than in a similar product (e.g., "Reduced in Calories")

**Light** - Only allowed on labels of foods that are "reduced in fat" or "reduced in Calories". It could also refer to the sensory characteristics of the food such as "light in colour". The characteristic of light will always be indicated on the food label. When you want to **increase** the amount of certain nutrients, look for the following types of claims:

**Source** - Contains a useful amount of nutrient (e.g., "Source of fibre")

**High or** Contains a high amount of the nutrient (e.g., "High source or **good source** vitamin C")

**Very high or** Contains a very high amount of the nutrient **excellent source** (e.g., "Excellent source of calcium")

## More Examples of Nutrition Claims:

**Source of omega-3 poly-unsaturated fatty acids**

**Low in saturated fat**

**Free of trans fatty acids**

**Cholesterol-free**

- Nutrition claims are optional. It is up to manufacturers to see if their product meets the criteria for a claim, and then to put the claim on the food label.
- Many products will have nutrition claims as these claims highlight a feature of interest to consumers.
- Use nutrition claims as a starting point but do not rely only on them to make comparisons. Use the Nutrition Facts to get the full details.

## Why are there claims on some products and not on other, similar products?

There are nutrition claims on some products but not on others because nutrition claims are optional. Manufacturers can choose whether or not to put a nutrition claim on their product if it meets the criteria set out in the regulations.

## What are Health Claims?

Health claims are a type of nutrition claim. Health claims about the following diet/health relationships are permitted:

- a healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats may reduce the risk of heart disease;
- a healthy diet with adequate calcium and vitamin D, and regular physical activity, help to achieve strong bones and may reduce the risk of osteoporosis;
- a healthy diet rich in a variety of vegetables and fruit may help reduce the risk of some types of cancer; and
- 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.