COOL TIPS FOR KIDS

Use the Nutrition Facts Label to Make Smart Food Choices

Nutrition Facts

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www.fda.gov/nutritioneducation
Size up Servings

The information listed on the Nutrition Facts label is usually based on one serving of the food. **Pay attention to the serving size and the number of servings you eat** or drink to discover the total number of calories and nutrients you are consuming.

If you eat or drink two servings of the food or beverage, you are getting double the calories and nutrients that are listed on the label. And keep in mind, packages can—and often do—contain more than one serving!

Consider the Calories

Calories from food provide the energy your body needs to function and grow. When you are active, you “burn” calories. **To keep your body healthy, balance the number of calories you eat and drink with the number of calories your body uses.**

Everyone’s calorie needs are different and depend on age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level. Curious about calorie needs? Check out [www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlatePlan](http://www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlatePlan).

**TIP**
- **100 calories** per serving of an individual food is considered a moderate amount
- **400 calories** or more per serving of an individual food is considered high in calories

Choose Nutrients Wisely

% Daily Value (%DV) shows how much a nutrient in a serving of the food contributes to a total daily diet. Use %DV to see if a serving of the food is high or low in an individual nutrient and to compare food products.

**TIP**
- **5% DV** or less of a nutrient per serving is considered low
- **20% DV** or more of a nutrient per serving is considered high

Choose foods that are higher in nutrients to get more of (dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium) and lower in nutrients to get less of (saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and added sugars).
Tips for Kids
See how easy and fun it can be to get your food facts first!

At Home

Measure out Single Servings of Snacks
Read the Nutrition Facts label on your favorite snacks and measure out single servings according to the serving size listed on the label. Keep them in resealable plastic bags or containers so you can quickly grab-and-go!

Add Healthy Choices to the Family Shopping List
Read the Label on food packages in your pantry and refrigerator. Then, add items to your family’s shopping list that are higher in nutrients to get more of and lower in nutrients to get less of.

Challenge Your Friends and Family
Challenge your friends and family to Read the Label when choosing a favorite snack. Look for interesting facts on Nutrition Facts labels … and then try to stump each other.

Ask them to guess things like:
• How big is one serving of the snack?
• How many servings are in the package?
• Which snacks are higher or lower in calories or in a particular nutrient?

When you’re done—choose your favorite healthy snacks and dig in (watch the serving size, of course)!

Play a Game
Hang out with other kids at the Snack Shack in the virtual world of Whyville. Play two fun games—Label Lingo and Snack Sort—and practice reading the label and making healthy snack choices!
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Read the Label in the Cafeteria Line
Look for the Nutrition Facts label on food and beverage packages like dairy products, snacks, and other foods in your school cafeteria. Choose the ones that are higher in nutrients to get more of and lower in nutrients to get less of.

Take the Great Lunchbox Challenge
Can you pack a healthy, 600-calorie (or other calorie amount) lunch? Read the Label on breads, sandwich ingredients, and snacks to put together a tasty lunch. Try a whole grain pita or tortilla as an alternative to some breads ... try spreads like mustard or hummus instead of mayonnaise ... and measure out single servings of snacks.

Check out the Nutrition Information
Look for nutrition information at restaurants. If it’s not posted, ask if it’s available. You can also check online before you head out to eat—just visit your favorite restaurant’s website.

Swap Out One Item
See if you can figure out which menu items are lower in nutrients to get less of. Then replace one food you would have ordered that is higher in saturated fat, sodium, or sugars with one that is lower in these nutrients. Now that’s smart swapping!

Compare Different Foods and Meal Sizes
Check out the differences in calories and nutrients between various menu choices. Compare foods that are prepared different ways, like grilled chicken vs. fried chicken, baked potatoes vs. French fries ... and compare small vs. large portions. And remember, a “super-sized” item can mean doubling (or tripling) the calories and nutrients because the serving size is larger.
Read the Label on Nuts and Seeds
Nut butters and unsalted nuts and seeds can make great snacks because they are good sources of protein, healthy fats, dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals. However, it's easy to eat more of these snacks than intended, so don’t forget to check out the serving sizes.

Look for Healthy Sweets
Try fruits as healthy sweet snacks and desserts and use fruit to top foods like cereal, yogurt, and pancakes instead of sugars, syrups, or other sweet toppings. Choose fresh fruits or packaged fruits (such as frozen, dried, and canned in 100% fruit juice) that are lower in added sugars and higher in dietary fiber, vitamins, and minerals.

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Check out the Cereal Aisle
Try to find a cereal that is lower in added sugars and higher in dietary fiber. Compare that cereal to ones you currently have at home.

Compare Frozen Pizzas and Veggies
Chill out in the freezer section and Read the Label. Compare frozen pizzas and vegetables (with and without sauce). Look for ones that are lower in saturated fat and sodium and are higher in dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.