

Reading Nutrition Labels

Nutrition labels are required by the FDA on all packaged foods. They are helpful when counting calories, counting carbs, or deciding whether something in the grocery store will fit your diet.

Serving Size The most important part of the nutrition label. All the numbers on a nutrition label are *per serving*. On this label, one serving is 3/4 of a cup.



Tip: Always Measure Your Portions

Use measuring cups! Otherwise you may be eating double the calories you think you are.

Calories The key to weight loss. If you want to lose weight, you'll have to reduce your calories.

Total Fat Important for your health, but less important for weight loss. Fat digests slower, which helps you feel full longer, but it's also high in calories.

Total Carbohydrates This is where you'll find sugars, starches and fiber. Avoid foods with high sugar content, especially added sugars.

Dietary Fiber Not all carbs are bad, and some are even beneficial. Fiber slows digestion, which makes you feel full longer and lowers blood sugar levels.

Protein Like fiber, protein digests slowly, which makes you feel full longer. It's essential for building and maintaining muscle mass.

Nutrition Facts			
about 8 servings Per Container			
Serving size		3/4 cup (54g)	
	Per 3/4 cup cereal	Cereal with 1/2 Cup Vit. A & D Fat Free Milk	
Calories	230	270	
	% Daily Value*	% Daily Value*	
Total Fat	5g 7%	5g 7%	
Saturated Fat	3.5g 17%	3.5g 17%	
Trans Fat	0g	0g	
Cholesterol	0mg 0%	<5mg 1%	
Sodium	180mg 8%	230mg 10%	
Total Carb.	41g 15%	47g 17%	
Dietary Fiber	2g 8%	2g 8%	
Total Sugars	17g	23g	
Incl. Added Sugars	16g 32%	16g 32%	
Protein	5g	9g	
Vitamin D	0mcg 0%	1.4mcg 8%	
Calcium	20mg 2%	170mg 15%	
Iron	3mg 15%	3mg 15%	
Potassium	140mg 2%	330mg 8%	
Vitamin A	160mcg 20%	240mcg 25%	
Vitamin C	17mg 20%	17mg 20%	
Vitamin E	7mg 40%	7mg 40%	

Cooking From Home

Not all foods are labeled. Fruits, vegetables, meat (and also alcohol) aren't required to list their calorie content, but you can still determine calories using a scale or measuring cups (weight tends to be more accurate).

- Some meals, like steak or baked potatoes can be measured individually. Look up the calories per ounce or per gram using your preferred app (a 2lb potato has more calories than a 6oz potato).
- For family-size items like meatloaf, add up the calories of the individual ingredients, then divide by serving size. For example, if all the ingredients in your meatloaf combined add up to 1600 calories and you cut it into 8 equal slices, each piece of meatloaf will be 200 calories.

