

Reading Food Labels Three Steps for Success

1. Start with the serving size

The top two lines on the Nutrition Facts panel are the place to start your nutrition search. Here you'll find the **Serving Size** (in common household measures and as weight in grams) as well as the **Servings per Container**.

Now, measure the amount you usually eat and compare it to the serving size listed on the label. If your usual portion is twice the serving on the Nutrition Facts panel, you need to double the numbers for calories, fat, and all the nutrients listed on the label.



2. Check out the calorie content carefully

Calories do count. Keeping a healthy weight is about balancing the calories you get from foods and beverages with the physical activity that you do. Calories are listed as **total Calories** and as **Calories from Fat** – for the portion size listed.

Since moderately active adults need about 2,000 calories per day, aim for about 500 calories per meal. Add a couple of smart snacks at 250 calories each. When one serving of a single food item has over 400 calories per serving, it is high in calories.

3. Make decisions using % Daily Value (DV) for nutrients

The **% Daily Value** column provides a quick check on the nutrition value of any food or beverage choice. Percent Daily Value (% DV) is based on 2,000 calories – about right for moderately active adults. Your needs may vary with your activity level.

For all nutrients on food labels, **5% or less Daily Value is low** and **20% or more Daily Value is high**. Look for low DV on calories, fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, sodium and sugars. Look for high DV on fiber, protein, minerals and vitamins.

What will you do for a healthier YOU?

- I will read at least one new food label every time I shop for groceries.
- I will read the Nutrition Facts panel on packaged snacks and beverages.
- I will choose items with 20% DV for vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- I will _____



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