

# Tip Sheets for Employees



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## How to Read Food Labels



The fuel we put into our body has direct bearing on our feeling of well-being. So, how can we make healthy choices? The food label is a great place to start!

### What is on the Label?

#### Serving Size

Start with the serving size and pay close attention to the number of servings in the package. Ask yourself, "How many servings do I consume?"

#### Calories

Move down the food label and read the calories. Many Americans consume more calories than needed for a healthy diet. Pay attention to how many calories are in each serving.

#### General Guide to Calories

- 40 Calories is low
- 100 Calories is moderate
- 400 Calories or more is high

#### Nutrients

Limit the following nutrients: Total Fat, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, Cholesterol and Sodium.

Get enough of the following nutrients: Dietary Fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron.

#### Percent Daily Value (%DV)

The %DV helps you determine if a serving of food is high or low in a nutrient, and it is based on a 2,000 calorie daily diet. 5%DV or less is low and 20%DV or more is high.



#### Additional Terms

- *Low cholesterol* – Less than 20 mg of cholesterol and 2 gm or less of saturated fat per serving.
- *Reduced* – 25% less of the specified nutrient or calories than the usual product.
- *Good source of* – Provides at least 10% of the daily value of a particular vitamin or nutrient per serving.
- *Fat free / sugar free* – Less than 1/2 gram of fat or sugar per serving.
- *Low sodium* – Less than 140 mg of sodium per serving.
- *High in* – Provides 20% or more of the Daily Value of a specified nutrient per serving.
- *Light* – 1/3 fewer calories or 1/2 the fat of the usual food.
- *Healthy* – Decreased fat, saturated fat, sodium, and cholesterol and at least 10% of the DV of vitamins A, C, iron, protein, calcium, and fiber.

### Shop Smart

Become a smart shopper by reading food labels to find out more about the foods you eat! Here's why it's smart to check out the Nutrition Facts found on most food labels:

- Find out which foods are good sources of fiber, calcium, iron, and vitamin C
- Compare similar foods to find out which one is lower in fat and calories
- Search for low-sodium foods
- Look for foods that are low in saturated fat and trans fats

Use these tips to help you make healthy food choices that meet your nutritional goals ([www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)).

### Want to Learn More?

For more information on food labels, please visit the following websites:

[www.mypyramid.gov](http://www.mypyramid.gov)  
[www.eatright.org](http://www.eatright.org)  
[www.cfsan.fda.gov](http://www.cfsan.fda.gov)

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