Kinship Link

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Pro Kinship for Kids

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Shop Smart - Get the Facts on the New Food Labels

The Nutrition Facts panel found on most food labels is updated to help you:

- Find out which foods are good sources of dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium
- Compare similar foods to find out which one is lower in calories
- Look for foods that are lower in saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and added sugars

Start with the servings per container and serving size

- Look here for both the number of servings in the package and the serving size (the amount for one serving).
- Remember to check your portion size to the serving size listed on the label. If the label serving size is one cup, and you eat two cups, you are getting twice the calories, fat, and other nutrients listed on the label.

Check out the total calories and find out how many calories are in a single serving.

Let the percent daily values be your guide

Use percent Daily Values (DV) to help you evaluate how a particular food fits into your daily eating plan:

- Daily Values are average levels of nutrients for a person eating 2,000 calories a day.
- Remember: percent DV are for the entire day - not just for one meal or snack.
- You may need more or less than 2,000 calories per day. For some nutrients you may need more or less than 100% DV.
- 5 percent or less is low - try to aim low in saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, and sodium.
- 20 percent or more is high - try to aim high in vitamins, minerals, and dietary fiber.


Nutrition Facts
Serving Size 8 oz
Serving Per Container 8
Amount Per Serving
Calories 54
% Daily Values*
Total Fat 0g 0%
Saturated Fat 0g 0%
Trans Fat 0g
Sodium 6mg 0%
Total Carbohydrate 14g 5%
Dietary Fiber 1g 4%
Sugars 11g
Protein 0g 0%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet

Limit saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and added sugars

Eating less of these may help reduce your risk for heart disease, high blood pressure, and cancer:

- Limit saturated fats to less than 10% of total calories daily by replacing them with unsaturated fats
- Limit trans fats to as low as possible
- Limit sodium to less than 2,300 mg daily (for adults and children 14 years and older)
- Limit added sugar to less than 10% of total calories daily

Get enough vitamins, minerals, and fiber

- Eat more dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, and potassium to maintain good health, and help reduce your risk of certain health problems such as osteoporosis.
- Remember to aim high for % DV of these nutrients.

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Additional nutrients

- Carbohydrates - there are three types of carbohydrates: sugars, starches, and fiber. Select whole-grain breads, cereals, rice, and pasta plus fruits, vegetables, and low-fat milk and yogurt.
- Proteins - aim for a variety, including seafood, poultry, lean meats, eggs, beans and peas, nuts, seeds, and soy products.

Check the ingredient list for foods with more than one ingredient for they must have an ingredient list on the label. Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. Those in the largest amounts are listed first. Food manufacturers are required to state if food products contain any ingredients that are derived from the eight major allergenic foods: milk, eggs, fish, crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans.

What health claims on food labels really mean

FDA also sets standards for health-related claims on food labels to help consumers identify foods that are rich in nutrients and may help to reduce the risk for certain diseases. For example, health claims may highlight the link between calcium and osteoporosis, dietary fiber and some cancers, saturated fat and heart disease, or high blood pressure and sodium.

Some of the most common claims seen on food packages:
Low Calorie - less than 40 calories per serving
Low Cholesterol - 20 mg or less 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 DV of a particular nutrient per serving
Calorie Free - less than 5 calories per serving
Fat Free/Sugar Free - less than 1/2 gram of fat or sugar per serving
Low Sodium - 140 mg or less of sodium per serving
High in (or Excellent Source of) - provides 20% or more of the DV of a specified nutrient per serving

Eating Right with Less Added Sugars

Sugar is found naturally in some foods and drinks, like fruit and milk, but it is also added to many of them. Added sugars give these items a sweet taste. Most Americans get too many calories from added sugars and over time this may affect their weight and health.

Many people think of desserts as the main source of added sugars, but there are many foods and drinks that contain them. For example, sweetened drinks like regular soft drinks, some fruit drinks, and energy drinks are all sources of added sugars. Snack foods, like crackers, and even ready-to-eat foods, like pizza and pasta sauces, can be made with added sugars. People may also add sugar to what they eat and drink, like sprinkling sugar over cereal or pouring flavored creamer in coffee.

How to limit sources of added sugars are to look for foods and drinks that don't have sugar (or some other sweetener) listed as the first ingredient. Other examples of sweeteners and sources of added sugars include: brown sugar, corn syrup, dextrose, fructose, high-fructose corn syrup, honey, maple syrup, molasses, sucrose, white granulated sugar. Foods and drinks that contain natural sources of sugar provide nutrients, like vitamins and minerals. For example, fruits like strawberries are a great source of vitamin C, and milk provides vitamins A and D, and calcium.

If you have a taste for something sweet try eating some fruit first. When you're thirsty reach for milk or water. Other ways to reduce sources of added sugars include: making or buying healthier versions of baked goods, including foods and drinks with added sugars less often, and eating or drinking smaller amounts.

Tips on how to reduce sources of added sugars:

- Sweeten low-fat plain yogurt with fresh, frozen, or canned (in its own juice) fruit in place of fruit-flavored yogurt.
- Add cinnamon and dried fruits to plain cooked oats instead of using instant flavored oatmeal.
- Substitute 100% fruit juice for fruit punch and other fruit-flavored drinks.
- Switch from sweetened to unsweetened applesauce.
- Drink plain low-fat milk instead of chocolate milk.
- Use jams and jellies with no sugar added.
- Enjoy a homemade smoothie with frozen fruit, low-fat milk, and yogurt in place of ice cream.
- Quench your thirst with water, low-fat milk, or 100% fruit or vegetable juice instead of sweetened beverages, like energy, soft, and sports drinks.