

Eat Healthy

Chapter 6

Learn How to Read Food Labels

You Will Learn About:

The different types of nutrition information on a food label

1. Ingredient List
2. Nutrition Facts Panel
3. Nutrient Claims

Reading food labels can help you see what is in the food you buy. Knowing what is in the food you buy can help you manage your blood sugar. There are 3 places to learn about food from a food label:

1. List of Ingredients

All ingredients in the food item are listed by most to least amount of weight. This means that foods contain more of the ingredients at the start of the list and less of the ingredients at the end of the list. The ingredient list can help you look for certain ingredients and help you avoid those that you have been advised not to eat.

Sugar in your diet will raise your blood sugar. Sugar appears in many forms. Look for the names below in the ingredient list to find sugar in your food.

Molasses	Fruit puree	Liquid sugar	Honey
Juice	Invert sugar	Cane sugar	Agave
Dextrin	Sugar beets	Sucrose	Dextrose
Maple syrup	Brown sugar	Glucose-fructose	
Malt syrup	Anhydrous dextrose	Brown rice syrup	
Cane syrup	Fruit-juice concentrate	High fructose corn syrup	
High maltose corn syrup			

The example below is an ingredient list for a food that has a lot of sugar:

INGREDIENTS: GLUCOSE-FRUCTOSE, CHICORY ROOT EXTRACT (INSULIN FIBRE), SUGAR, WHOLE GRAIN ROLLED OATS, PUFFED WHEAT, HIGH MALTOSE CORN SYRUP, WHOLE GRAIN BARLEY FLAKES, CHOCOLATE CHIPS (CHOCOLATE LIQUOR, SUGAR, COCOA BUTTER, MILK INGREDIENT, SOY LECITHIN, NATURAL FLAVOUR), CORN BRAN, PALM KERNAL OIL, CRISP RICE (RICE FLOUR, MALT EXTRACT, SUGAR, SALT), CANOLA OIL, WHEAT BRAN, GLYCERIN, COCOA, WHOLE GRAIN WHEAT, GRAHAM FLOUR, SOY LECITHIN, CORN STARCH, NATURAL FLAVOUR, MALTODEXTRIN, SALT, TRISODIUM PHOSPHATE, BHT.

2. Nutrition Facts Table

(Adapted from www.eatrightontario.ca)

The nutrition facts table gives you information about the amount of fat, protein, carbohydrate, and other nutrients in food. To manage your diabetes, look for the amount of:

- Carbohydrates
- Fibre
- Sugar
- Fat
- Sodium

Nutrition Facts	
Valeur nutritive	
Serving Size (172 g) / Portion (172 g)	
Amount	% Daily Value % valeur quotidienne
Calories / Calories 200	
Fat / Lipides 1 g	1 %
Saturated / saturés 0.3 g	
+ Trans / trans 0 g	1 %
Cholesterol / Cholestérol 0 mg	
Sodium / Sodium 7 mg	0 %
Carbohydrate / Glucides 36 g	12 %
Fibre / Fibres 11 g	45 %
Sugars / Sucres 6 g	
Protein / Protéines 13 g	
Vitamin A / Vitamine A	1 %
Vitamin C / Vitamine C	1 %
Calcium / Calcium	4 %
Iron / Fer	24 %

Carbohydrate: The amount of carbohydrate on the nutrition facts table is for **total carbohydrate**. This total includes starch, fibre and sugars. If you are counting carbohydrates to manage your blood sugar, subtract the amount of fibre from the total carbohydrate listed. Do this because fibre does not raise your blood sugar.

Use the label on page 203 as an example:

- There are 36 grams (g) of total carbohydrate
- There are 11 grams (g) of fibre
- Subtract the amount of fibre (11g) from the total carbohydrate (36g)
36g (total carbohydrate) subtract 11g (fibre) equals 25g
- This means there are 25 grams of carbohydrate that will turn into sugar in your body (instead of 36 grams)

Fibre: Fibre helps to manage your blood sugar, blood cholesterol and blood pressure. Aim to eat 25 to 50 grams of fibre every day to keep your body healthy and manage your blood sugar.

- Look for products that have a % Daily Value (% DV) of fibre of at least 15% to help you decide between products
- Compare the % DV of fibre between two products. A product with the higher % DV is the higher fibre choice

The % DV is found on the right-hand side of a nutrition facts table. It is a guide to help you make informed food choices.

Use the % DV to either:

1. Compare two foods to help you make an informed food choice, or
2. Choose foods that are **higher** in the nutrients you may want more of (example: fibre) or **lower** in the nutrients you want to avoid or eat less of (example: saturated fat, trans fats and sodium)

Sugars: The amount of sugar on the nutrition facts table includes sugars found naturally in foods (like in fruit and milk) plus added sugars such as white sugar, honey and syrups. Aim to lower the amount of food and drinks

you have that include added sugar or are sweetened. Look at the ingredient list to see if a food has added sugars.

Fat: The amount of fat in your food is on the nutrition facts table. Look for products with little saturated fat and no trans fat. Use the % DV to help you. A food with 5% DV or less of saturated fat is a low fat choice. Look for ingredients in the chart below to find saturated fat and trans fat in your food.

Sodium: The amount of sodium in your food is also listed on the nutrition facts table. Too much sodium can increase your risk for high blood pressure. A food with 5% DV of sodium or less is a low sodium choice. Sodium appears in many forms. Look for ingredients in the chart below to find sodium in your food.

Use the table on the next page to learn what ingredients should be thought of as fat or sodium.

Nutrient	Ingredients to look for on the ingredient list
Saturated fat	These ingredients tell you there is saturated fat in the food: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Butter• Coconut or coconut oil• Lard, shortening, suet, chicken fat, bacon fat, tallow or beef fat• Cocoa butter• Palm or palm kernel oil• Powdered whole milk solids
Trans fat	These ingredients tell you there is trans fat in the food: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats and oils• Margarine and shortening made with hydrogenated or partially hydrogenated fats or oils
Sodium	These ingredients tell you there is sodium in the food: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Soy sauce• Fish sauce

3. Nutrition Claims

Some packaged foods have nutrition claims. There are two types of nutrition claims:

1. Nutrient content claims

Nutrient content claims tell you about the amount of a nutrient in a food.

These claims can help you choose foods that have a nutrient that you may want less of (such as sugar) or that you may want more of (such as fibre).

2. Health claims

Health claims tell you how a food can improve your health when you eat it as part of your healthy diet. See this example of a health claim from Health Canada: ‘a healthy diet containing foods high in potassium and low in sodium may reduce the risk of high blood pressure, a risk factor for stroke and heart disease’.

Nutrition claims follow rules from Health Canada. These rules make sure the claims are used in the same way on all food products. These claims only tell you about a few key nutrients. Refer to the nutrition facts table to make food choices that are best for you. Examples of nutrition claims are in the next table:

Examples of nutrition claims	What it means	Where you might see this claim	Beware
<p>Cholesterol free No cholesterol</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small amount 	<p>Potato chips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cholesterol only comes from animals • Cholesterol free products may still be high in fat
<p>Low fat</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small amount of fat • 3 grams of fat or less per serving 	<p>Fruit bottom yogurt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low fat does not mean low in sugar • Choose low fat yogurt with no sugar added
<p>No sugar added</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sugar has not been added to the product 	<p>Juice</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Juices are high in calories and have natural sugar
<p>Light</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foods that have less fat or calories (energy) 	<p>Light peanut butter</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can also refer to colour or texture e.g., “light” or “lite” olive oil

Summary

- Sugar can appear in many forms (such as molasses, cane syrup, honey, dextrose, fruit puree etc.) on the list of ingredients
- Sodium can appear in many forms (such as soy sauce, fish sauce) on the list of ingredients
- Look for foods with at least 15 percent Daily Value (%DV) of fibre on the Nutrition Facts Table
- Look for foods with less than 5 percent Daily Value (%DV) of sodium on the Nutrition Facts Table
- Read Nutrition Claims carefully. For example, foods like potato chips with a claim to be 'cholesterol free' can still be high in fat