

## Using the Food Label: What's On It for You?

Food labels provide a wealth of useful information about the product inside the package—product descriptions, nutrition facts, ingredient lists and more. That's why label reading is a useful tool for making food choices that match your nutrition goals. Label reading helps you:

- Compare the nutrients and calories when choosing foods and beverages.
- Calculate the calorie and nutrient amounts if you eat bigger or smaller servings than those listed on the label.
- Limit intake of fat (e.g., saturated and *trans* fats), cholesterol and sodium.
- Choose foods with more vitamins, minerals and fiber.
- Make food choices to help you reach health goals, such as losing weight or reducing risk for developing conditions such as heart disease, diabetes or high blood pressure.



Rainbow Veggie-Chicken Stir-Fry

### Want Facts?

Check out the Nutrition Facts, which appear on most packaged food labels, as well as on or near many fresh products, including fruits, vegetables, meat, poultry and seafood in the grocery store. Nutrition Facts provide nutrition specifics: the number of calories and amount of some key nutrients in one serving. (Tip: The Nutrition Facts are based on the serving size stated on the label.) Regulated by the government, Nutrition Facts must be accurate. We've used color cues to help you navigate this sample Nutrition Facts label.

- **Start at the top ... with the serving size and servings per container.** You'll find a serving size listed in two ways: 1) a household measure, such as a cup or tablespoon, or "piece" count, and 2) the metric amount (weight or volume). All the Nutrition Facts on the label relate to this government-regulated serving size. Servings per container tell how many label-size servings are in the entire package.
- **Next stop ... calories.** Here you'll find the amount of food energy (calories) in one label serving. You'll also see how many of these calories come from fat. Being aware of how many calories you eat in a day helps you maintain a healthy weight.
- **Now ... the nutrients.** For several nutrients, you'll find the amounts per serving both in metric measures (grams or milligrams) and as **% Daily Values**. Nutrition Facts don't list all the nutrients a food provides—just ones that often need special attention. For example, most of us need to:
  - \* Limit total fat, saturated fat, *trans* fat, cholesterol and sodium, since too much of these can lead to health problems.
  - \* Take in more fiber, vitamins A and C, calcium and iron. Eating enough of these nutrients may improve health and reduce the risk for some health conditions.

Sample Label:  
Reduced Fat Whole Grain Crackers

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 7 Crackers (29g) Servings Per Container About 8	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 120	Calories from Fat 25
	% Daily Value *
Total Fat 3g	5%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Trans Fat 0g	
Polyunsaturated Fat 1.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 0.5g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	6%
Total Carbohydrate 21g	7%
Dietary Fiber 3g	13%
Sugars 0g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 0%	Iron 6%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:	
	Calories: 2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less Than 65g 80g
Sat Fat	Less Than 20g 25g
Cholesterol	Less Than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less Than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 375g
Dietary Fiber	25g 30g

INGREDIENTS: WHOLE WHEAT, SOYBEAN OIL, SALT, MONOGLYCERIDES.

• **What are Daily Values (DV)?** They're government-defined reference points that show "about right" amounts for some key nutrients for those who take in 2000 calories a day. **The DV for several nutrients are listed on the footnote at the bottom of the Nutrition Facts. The % DV shows the percentage of the DV that one label serving of that food provides.** That makes it easy to see if one serving has a lot or a little of a listed nutrient and to compare the nutrient amounts among other foods or beverages.

- \* Use this Quick Guide to % DV. This is the "5-20" rule of thumb: 5% DV or less is low and 20% DV or more is high.
- \* Look for foods with 5% DV or less of nutrients you want to limit, such as total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium . . . and for foods with 20% DV or more for nutrients you want to get more of, such as dietary fiber or vitamins and minerals.

### Serving Size Savvy

Serving sizes stated on Nutrition Facts are based on typical portions for most people. Your portions may be bigger or smaller, so consider how the portion you eat fits with your nutrition goals. Here's how it works:

- *Remember: one label serving does not equal the whole package.* Check the serving size and the number of servings per container in the Nutrition Facts *before* you eat or drink the whole amount.
- *If your portion is twice the label serving size, double the amount of nutrients—and number of calories, too.* Pay close attention if you need to limit calories or fat, especially for higher-calorie or higher-fat foods. Conversely, if your portion is smaller than a label serving, you'll take in fewer nutrients and calories.

Take time to read food labels—for your good health.

*Check out these delicious healthy living recipes. We've provided nutrition information so you can see how a serving fits into your healthful eating plan.*

## Rainbow Veggie-Chicken Stir-Fry

Prep: 15 min.  
Total: 26 min.

- 1/4 cup KRAFT Light Zesty Italian Reduced Fat Dressing
- 1 Tbsp. lite soy sauce
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 lb. boneless skinless chicken breasts, cut into strips
- 3 cups chopped mixed red, yellow and green peppers
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 1 Tbsp. oil
- 3 cups hot cooked brown rice

**MIX** dressing, soy sauce and garlic. Place chicken in medium bowl. Add 1 Tbsp. of the dressing mixture; toss to coat. Let stand 5 min.

**HEAT** oil in large skillet or wok on high heat. Add chicken and vegetables; stir-fry 3 to 4 min. or until chicken is cooked through.

**ADD** remaining dressing mixture; mix well. Reduce heat to medium-low; simmer 2 min., stirring occasionally. Serve over the rice.

Makes 4 servings.

**Nutrition Bonus:** The colorful peppers team up to provide an excellent source of vitamin C in this low-calorie, low-fat quick-and-easy meal.

**Nutrition Information Per Serving:** 370 calories, 9g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 65mg cholesterol, 430mg sodium, 43g carbohydrate, 5g dietary fiber, 4g sugars, 30g protein, 30%DV vitamin A, 140%DV vitamin C, 4%DV calcium, 10%DV iron.

**Exchange:** 2 Starch, 2 Vegetable, 3 Meat (VL), 1 Fat

Dietary Exchanges based on *Exchange Lists for Meal Planning* © 2003 by the American Diabetes Association and the American Dietetic Association.

## Halibut with Mushroom Couscous Pilaf

Prep: 10 min.  
Total: 25 min.

- 1 lb. halibut fillet, cut into 4 pieces
- 1/4 cup KRAFT Greek Vinaigrette Dressing, divided
- 2 cups sliced fresh mushrooms
- 1-1/2 cups water
- 2 cups frozen peas and carrots
- 1 cup whole wheat couscous, uncooked

**PREHEAT** oven to 450°F. Place fish in shallow baking dish. Drizzle with 2 Tbsp. of the dressing.

**BAKE** 12 to 15 min. or until fish flakes easily with fork. Meanwhile, cook mushrooms in remaining 2 Tbsp. dressing in medium skillet 3 to 4 min. or until mushrooms are tender, stirring occasionally. Add water; bring to boil. Stir in peas and carrots; cover. Reduce heat to low; simmer 5 min. Stir in couscous. Cover. Remove from heat; let stand 5 min.

**SPOON** couscous mixture onto four serving plates; top with the fish.

Makes 4 servings.

**Nutrition Bonus:** Want to incorporate more fish into your diet? Try this low-calorie low-fat meal that is rich in vitamin A from the peas and carrots.

**Nutrition Information Per Serving:** 390 calories, 9g total fat, 1.5g saturated fat, 35mg cholesterol, 280mg sodium, 43g carbohydrate, 8g dietary fiber, 4g sugars, 33g protein, 140%DV vitamin A, 15%DV vitamin C, 10%DV calcium, 15%DV iron.

**Exchange:** 2 Starch, 2 Vegetable, 3 Meat (VL), 1-1/2 Fat

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