

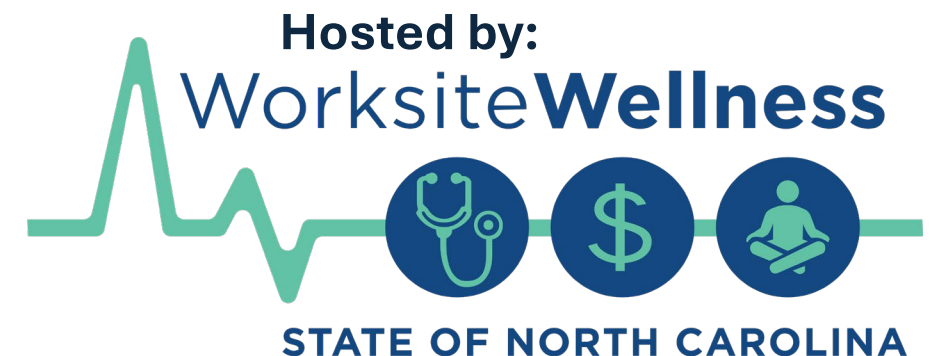
# Let's lunch and learn!

April 2026

If you participate in the State Health Plan, you can find a nutritionist near you by logging into your Aetna account.

Dietician visits are covered at 100 percent when an in-network provider is used. Visit [www.shpnc.gov](http://www.shpnc.gov) to learn more.

For future Worksite Wellness Lunch and Learn events or recordings of previous events, visit [oshr.nc.gov/wellness-webinars](http://oshr.nc.gov/wellness-webinars).





# Food Label 101

Making Smarter Food Choices

By Katie Godin, RD, LDN

# Katie Godin, RD, LDN

- Lifestyle Medical Centers offers Nutrition Counseling to assist with educating you on how to make positive lifestyle changes alongside continual support and encouragement.
- **Services offered:**
  - Weight Management
  - Women's Health
  - Sports Nutrition
  - Chronic Disease Counseling
  - Bariatric Support
  - Smoking Cessation
  - Sleep Assessment and Stress Management
- <https://lifestylemedicalcenters.com/>



# What Exactly Is a Food Label?

Found on  
packaged  
foods

Includes  
nutrition facts  
+ ingredients

Regulated by  
authorities  
(like the FDA)

Standardized  
format for easy  
comparison



# Why Do Food Labels Matter?

Help you make  
healthier choices  
/ can compare  
products

Ingredient  
transparency  
(hidden  
sugars/fats for ex)

Important for  
allergies &  
dietary needs

Prevent  
misleading  
marketing tricks

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Food Label:  
Updated in  
2016 . First  
major update  
in 20 years.

## New Label / What's Different?

Servings:  
larger,  
bolder type

### Nutrition Facts

8 servings per container  
**Serving size** 2/3 cup (55g)

**Amount per serving**  
**Calories** 230

% Daily Value\*

**Total Fat** 8g 10%

Saturated Fat 1g 5%

*Trans* Fat 0g

**Cholesterol** 0mg 0%

**Sodium** 160mg 7%

**Total Carbohydrate** 37g 13%

Dietary Fiber 4g 14%

Total Sugars 12g

Includes 10g Added Sugars 20%

**Protein** 3g

Vitamin D 2mcg 10%

Calcium 260mg 20%

Iron 8mg 45%

Potassium 240mg 6%

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Serving sizes  
updated

Calories:  
larger type

Daily Values  
Updated

New:  
added sugars

Change  
in some  
nutrients  
required

Actual  
amounts  
declared

New  
footnote

# Key Changes to Daily Values in 2016 Update

- **Added Sugars** - A new Daily Value was established for added sugars, setting the limit at 50 grams or no more than 10% of total daily calories
- **Sodium** – Decreased from 2400mg to 2300mg per day.
- **Fiber** – Increased from 25g per day to 28g per day.
- **Potassium** – Increased from 3500mg to 4300mg per day – deemed underconsumed as a whole.
- **Vitamin D added** – Considered a nutrient also underconsumed along with notable public health concern for Vitamin D deficiency.
- **Total Fat** – 35% of calories recommended for fat vs. 30% of calories = so 65g per day increased to 78g per day.



## Understanding The Food Label

# Serving Size : Start Here!

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First thing to check

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**All numbers are based on the serving size not the container size!**

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Reflects the typical amount people eat, not necessarily a recommendation of how much you should eat. That is individualized!

**1.** Serving Information →

**2.** Calories →

**3.** Nutrients →

**4.** Quick Guide to percent Daily Value (%DV) →

- 5% or less is **low**
- 20% or more is **high**

| <b>Nutrition Facts</b>        |                     |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|
| 4 servings per container      |                     |
| <b>Serving size</b>           | <b>1 cup (227g)</b> |
| <b>Amount per serving</b>     |                     |
| <b>Calories</b>               | <b>280</b>          |
| <b>% Daily Value*</b>         |                     |
| <b>Total Fat</b> 9g           | <b>12%</b>          |
| Saturated Fat 4.5g            | <b>23%</b>          |
| Trans Fat 0g                  |                     |
| <b>Cholesterol</b> 35mg       | <b>12%</b>          |
| <b>Sodium</b> 850mg           | <b>37%</b>          |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 34g | <b>12%</b>          |
| Dietary Fiber 4g              | <b>14%</b>          |
| Total Sugars 6g               |                     |
| Includes 0g Added Sugars      | <b>0%</b>           |
| <b>Protein</b> 15g            |                     |
| Vitamin D 0mcg                | 0%                  |
| Calcium 320mg                 | 25%                 |
| Iron 1.6mg                    | 8%                  |
| Potassium 510mg               | 10%                 |

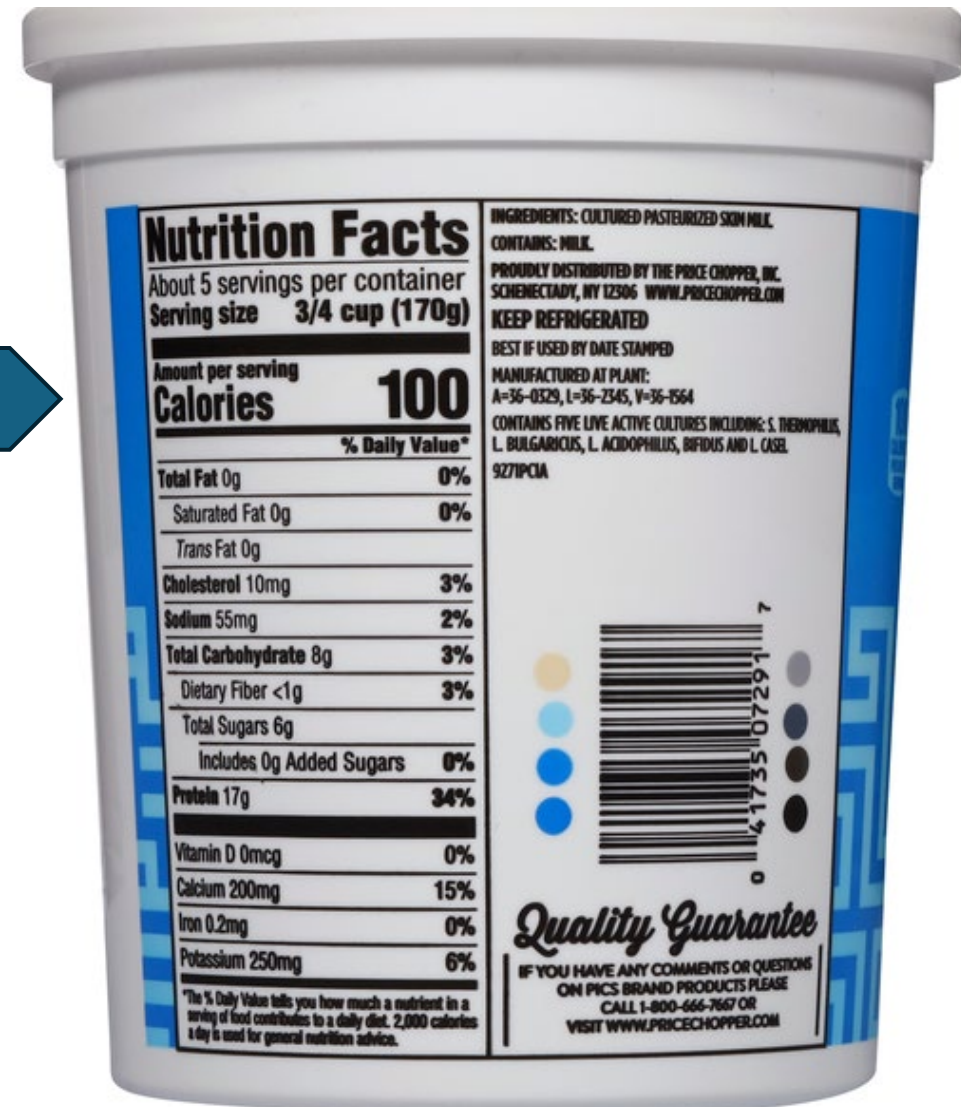
\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

# Calories

**Calories** = how much energy you get from the food you are eating. In this example  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of Plain Greek Yogurt = 100 calories.

Food labels are automatically adjusting daily value %'s to reflect a 2000 calorie diet (not for everyone!). This is a general amount and needs to be adjusted up/down based on individual needs.

Watch out for high-calorie, low-nutrient foods (for example, low protein / fiber / high added sugar / saturated fat).



# Nutrients to Limit

- Saturated Fat / Trans Fat
  - <10% of total calories in a day
  - Ex. 2000 calorie diet = <200 cal from Saturated Fat = <22g per day
- Sodium
  - Aim for 1500-2300 mg per day (depending on preexisting conditions such as HTN or Heart Disease).
- Added Sugars : Found Under Carbohydrate Section
  - 25g or < per day for Women
  - 35g or < per day for Men
  - Differ from natural sugars as they are typically processed and added to foods to enhance flavor.

|                               |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Total Fat</b> 9g           | <b>12%</b> |
| → Saturated Fat 4.5g          | <b>23%</b> |
| → <i>Trans Fat</i> 0g         |            |
| <b>Cholesterol</b> 35mg       | <b>12%</b> |
| → <b>Sodium</b> 850mg         | <b>37%</b> |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 34g | <b>12%</b> |
| Dietary Fiber 4g              | <b>14%</b> |
| Total Sugars 6g               |            |
| → Includes 0g Added Sugars    | <b>0%</b>  |
| <b>Protein</b> 15g            |            |
| <hr/>                         |            |
| Vitamin D 0mcg                | <b>0%</b>  |
| Calcium 320mg                 | <b>25%</b> |
| Iron 1.6mg                    | <b>8%</b>  |
| Potassium 510mg               | <b>10%</b> |

# Nutrients to Focus On

- Protein
  - Found towards bottom of label
  - Aiming for 20-25% of total calories from protein
  - Ex: 100-125g per day for 2000 calorie diet.
- Fiber
  - Found in Carbohydrate Section
  - 25-35g per day (Recommended by RD's)
- Healthy Fat (Unsaturated)
  - General Daily Value set by FDA is 73g per day or 35% of calories. Aim for mostly Unsaturated fat.
- Vitamin / Mineral Information
  - These nutrients on the label are typically nutrients Americans do not get enough of. Focusing on these can aid with the prevention of developing osteoporosis, anemia, and high blood pressure.

| <b>Nutrition Facts</b>       |              |
|------------------------------|--------------|
| <b>Serving size</b>          | <b>(30g)</b> |
| <b>Amount Per Serving</b>    |              |
| <b>Calories</b>              | <b>190</b>   |
| <b>% Daily Value*</b>        |              |
| <b>Total Fat</b> 18g         | <b>23%</b>   |
| Saturated Fat 2g             | <b>10%</b>   |
| <i>Trans</i> Fat 0g          |              |
| <b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg       | <b>0%</b>    |
| <b>Sodium</b> 0mg            | <b>0%</b>    |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 5g | <b>2%</b>    |
| Dietary Fiber 3g             | <b>11%</b>   |
| Total Sugars 0g              |              |
| Includes 0g Added Sugars     | <b>0%</b>    |
| <b>Protein</b> 6g            | <b>12%</b>   |
| <b>Vitamin D</b> 0mcg        | <b>0%</b>    |
| <b>Calcium</b> 52mg          | <b>4%</b>    |
| <b>Iron</b> 0.9mg            | <b>4%</b>    |
| <b>Potassium</b> 0mg         | <b>0%</b>    |
| <b>Vitamin A</b>             | <b>0%</b>    |
| <b>Vitamin C</b>             | <b>0%</b>    |

\*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.



# Daily Values vs % Daily Values

- **#3** Daily Values (DVs) are recommended total daily nutrient intakes (in grams/milligrams) set by the FDA.
- **#4** The % Daily Value (%DV) shows how much a nutrient in a single serving contributes to that total daily diet.

| Nutrition Facts               |                      |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| 8 servings per container      |                      |
| <b>Serving size</b>           | <b>2/3 cup (55g)</b> |
| <b>Amount per serving</b>     |                      |
| <b>Calories</b>               | <b>230</b>           |
| % Daily Value*                |                      |
| <b>Total Fat</b> 8g           | <b>10%</b>           |
| Saturated Fat 1g              | 5%                   |
| Trans Fat 0g                  |                      |
| <b>Cholesterol</b> 0mg        | <b>0%</b>            |
| <b>Sodium</b> 160mg           | <b>7%</b>            |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 37g | <b>13%</b>           |
| Dietary Fiber 4g              | 14%                  |
| Total Sugars 12g              |                      |
| Includes 10g Added Sugars     | 20%                  |
| <b>Protein</b> 3g             |                      |
| Vitamin D 2mcg                | 10%                  |
| Calcium 260mg                 | 20%                  |
| Iron 8mg                      | 45%                  |
| Potassium 240mg               | 6%                   |

\* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

# Daily Values: What's Included?

## Mandatory Nutrients:

- Total Fat, Saturated Fat, Cholesterol, Sodium, Total Carbohydrate, Dietary Fiber, Added Sugars, Vitamin D, Calcium, Iron, and Potassium must list % DV because the FDA has established Daily Values for them.

## Added Nutrients:

- If a manufacturer adds vitamins or minerals (e.g., "fortified" or "enriched"), the % DV must be included.

## Nutrient Content Claims:

- If a package makes a claim about a nutrient's health effects or amount (e.g., "high in fiber"), the % DV must be listed. This is where you may find % DV for Protein, otherwise, not mandatory to include that nutrient.

# Daily Values: What Doesn't Have to Be Included?

## Trans Fat:

- No %DV exists because experts recommend avoiding it, so it is listed only in grams.

## Total Sugars:

- No %DV is set, though added sugars *do* have a %DV.

## Protein:

- Not required unless a claim is made (e.g., "high protein") or the product is for children under 4.

## Calories from Fat:

- This was removed in the 2016 FDA revision, as the *type* of fat matters more than the amount.

## Insignificant Amounts:

- If a nutrient (like iron or fiber) is present in an amount so small that the % DV rounds to zero, it may be omitted.

## Specific Populations:

- Labels for foods intended for children under 4 or infants do not include % DVs for some items

## Daily Values : Examples of Suggested Amounts to Aim for on a Daily Basis.

| Nutrient                  | DV      | %DV      | Goal                  |
|---------------------------|---------|----------|-----------------------|
| Total Fat / Saturated Fat | 73g/20g | =100% DV | Less than for Sat Fat |
| Sodium                    | 2,300mg | =100% DV | Less than             |
| Dietary Fiber             | 28g     | =100% DV | At least              |
| Added Sugars              | 50g     | =100% DV | Less than             |
| Vitamin D                 | 20mcg   | =100% DV | At least              |
| Calcium                   | 1,300mg | =100% DV | At least              |
| Iron                      | 18mg    | =100% DV | At least              |
| Potassium                 | 4,700mg | =100% DV | At least              |

# What About Percent Daily Value?

- Helps show how much a nutrient contributes to your daily diet.
- Remember : It's based on a 2,000-calorie diet so it's generalized not personalized.
- **Bottom Line:** Aids with getting more helpful nutrients and allows for you to work towards limiting certain nutrients.



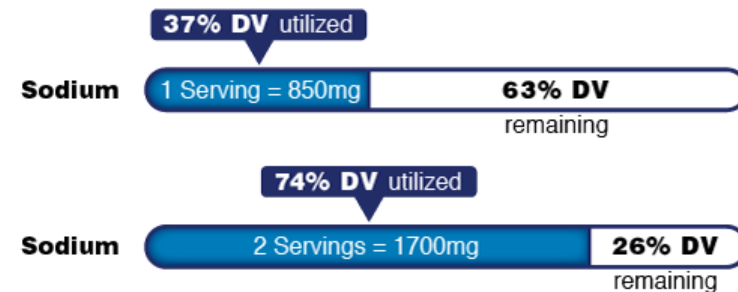
|                               | % Daily Value* |
|-------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Total Fat</b> 9g           | <b>12%</b>     |
| Saturated Fat 4.5g            | <b>23%</b>     |
| <i>Trans</i> Fat 0g           |                |
| <b>Cholesterol</b> 35mg       | <b>12%</b>     |
| <b>Sodium</b> 850mg           | <b>37%</b>     |
| <b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 34g | <b>12%</b>     |
| Dietary Fiber 4g              | <b>14%</b>     |
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| <b>Protein</b> 15g            |                |
| <hr/>                         |                |
| Vitamin D 0mcg                | 0%             |
| Calcium 320mg                 | 25%            |
| Iron 1.6mg                    | 8%             |
| Potassium 510mg               | 10%            |

Sodium is based off of 2300 mg per day.

Daily % Value (%DV) for protein is not required on food labels unless a "high protein" claim is made.

# General Guide To % Daily Value

- **5% DV** or less of a nutrient per serving is considered **low**
- **20% DV** or more of a nutrient per serving is considered **high**
- **More often, choose foods that are:**
  - Higher in %DV for Dietary Fiber, Vitamin D, Calcium, Iron, and Potassium
  - Lower in %DV for Saturated Fat, Sodium, and Added Sugars



# Understanding The Ingredients List

- Listed from most to least by weight.
- Shorter list = less processed.
- Look for hidden sources of sugar: Syrups, ingredients ending in “ose”, fruit juice concentrates, molasses.... Remember to look at added sugars on the food label as well for clearer picture.
- Look for high amount of food additives : preservatives (Sodium Benzoate), artificial colors (Red 40), Flavor enhancers (Msg), Emulsifiers/Stabilizers (Carageenan, lecithin).
- **Apps that can help: Yuca, Fooducate, and EWG’s Healthy Living.**



# Tricky Food Label Marketing Terms

- **All Natural** : Nothing artificial or manufactured has been added to the product. Does not include food production such as pesticide use.
- **Processed** : Any food that has been altered from its original state. For ex. Bagged salads would be a processed food.
- **Made with real fruit/ veggies**: A product can make this claim with any amount of fruit/veggie in the product (insignificant amounts that will not assist with meeting your daily 5-9 servings of a fruit or veggie for example).
- **Superfood**: Currently no definition of what a superfood is. Sometimes can be viewed as the “all mighty” of foods and avoids connection to the ideas of a balanced diet in general (lots of fruits / veggies / etc..).
- **Clean**: Purely for marketing as the FDA does not regulate the use of this term.
- **Low Fat**: Some products can be labeled as “low fat” however still have substantial amounts of other ingredients (high sugar for example).



# Quick Label Reading Tips : Overview

1

Start with  
serving size

2

Check calories

3

Scan %DV

4

Read  
ingredients list

5

Compare similar  
products : Yuca  
App

A scenic landscape featuring a large, leafy tree in the foreground, a field of yellow flowers in the middle ground, and a clear blue sky. The text "THANK YOU" is centered in the lower half of the image.

THANK YOU

# References

- <https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-education-resources-materials/nutrition-facts-label>
- <https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/daily-value-nutrition-and-supplement-facts-labels>
- <https://www.fda.gov/food/nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label>
- <https://www.obesityaction.org/resources/navigating-misleading-food-marketing/>
- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC5903167/>

Let's Cook!

Chicken Ceasar Smash Tacos!

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