

## Misleading Labels

Tips for understanding food labels.

Do you find nutrition labels confusing? You're not alone — even those who consider themselves savvy label readers don't always understand. Labels can be very misleading. Below you will find information to help you decipher labels and choose nutritious food options.

### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup 253g

Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving

**Calories 260**    Calories from Fat 72

**%Daily Value\***

**Total Fat** 8g    **13%**

Saturated Fat 3g    **17%**

**Cholesterol** 130mg    **44%**

**Sodium** 1010mg    **42%**

**Total Carbohydrate** 22g    **7%**

Dietary Fiber 9g    **36%**

Sugars 4g

**Protein** 25g

Vitamin A 20%    •    Vitamin C 5%

Calcium 6%    •    Iron 3%

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	2,400 mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:  
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

### Serving Size

Is this the amount you will eat? Will you eat more or less?

Pay attention to the serving size as oftentimes there are two to three (or more) servings in an individual package.

### Calories

How do these calories fit into your recommended daily caloric needs? Choose a wide range of lower-calorie foods from each food group to get the full range of nutrients and vitamins your body needs.

### Fat

Look for no more than 3 grams of fat for every 100 calories or no more than one-third of the total calories from fat.

### Cholesterol

The recommendation is a maximum of 200 to 300 milligrams per day.

### Sodium

More than 400 milligrams is considered a high-sodium food (600 milligrams for an entrée). A low-sodium diet is considered to be no more than 1,500 to 2,000 milligrams of sodium per day, about half of which naturally occurs in foods.

### Fiber

Look for grains and cereals with at least 3 grams per serving.

### Nutrients

Choose products with 20 percent daily values of vitamins, calcium and iron.

Since there is a need to eat healthy, manufacturers will conjure up ways to make statements on packaging that are deceiving. Be careful of the following statements, which are appearing on many products on the market today.

- “Made with whole grains”

The front of a cracker box reads 5 grams of whole grain — you might expect it to be a high-fiber product — no way. The fiber content is minimal. Five grams of whole grain does not equal five grams of fiber. In fact, 5 grams of whole grain is about one-sixth of an ounce of whole-wheat flour or oatmeal,

essentially nothing. Yes, whole grains are healthy, yet any product worth its grain should have at least 3 to 6 (or more) grams of fiber per serving because of the whole grains it contains.

Some cereal manufacturers have switched to whole grains, yet when it comes to children's cereals, the supposedly wholesome switch did nothing to boost the fiber content because the main ingredient is still sugar! Despite the whole-grain boost, many kids' cereals are more like crunchy candy rather than a decent way to start the day.

- **"Calorie-free food"**

Even if the label states zero calories per serving, this does not necessarily mean it is a zero-calorie food. According to law, any serving size that has less than 5 calories for the stated serving size can be listed as zero calories. So, this product may contain 4.99999 calories per serving. You can imagine the surprise on people's faces when they discover that no-calorie butter-flavored spray contains more than 900 calories in the bottle!

Many people love the convenience of nonstick cooking sprays. The stated serving size is one-third-of-a-second spray. It's very unlikely that any human finger can work that quickly, so most people are getting more oil than they think when using these products.

- **"Baked"**

The word baked does not always mean low fat. Baking versus frying usually means a lower-calorie food. This applies to foods like chicken and fish, but what about a baked cookie? The word "baked" on a cookie label is there to mislead you. Honestly, how else does one make a cookie other than by baking it in the oven? Other than at the county fair where they fry anything that is edible, cookies have always been baked with fat and sugar. A baked cookie is a cookie.

If you think it's a high-fiber food, check the label to make sure there is at least 3 grams of fiber per serving. If it's a zero-calorie-per-serving food, use the product cautiously to avoid getting excessive hidden calories. If you think baked automatically means low fat, check the label to make sure.