

Food Purchasing

Purpose

This section is intended to provide information on reading and understanding nutrition facts labels and selecting healthy foods to buy.

Objectives

At the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Identify key elements of a nutrition facts label.
- Choose five healthier menu items to buy.
- Explain the difference between “free” foods and “low” foods.
- Describe the difference between “reduced/less” foods and “light/lite” foods.

Outline

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*The American Diabetes Association Recognizes this education service as meeting the National Standards for Diabetes Self-Management Education and Support.

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Reading labels

The typical food product has three standard label sections:

- Front cover
- Ingredient list
- Nutrition facts label

Front cover

- Contains the name of the product and the manufacturer
- Names can sound very healthy; foods may not be as healthy as they sound
- Nutritional claims are found here: fat-free, sugar-free, low-carb, natural ingredients



Ingredients: Chicken broth, enriched egg noodles (water, enriched semolina [wheat, niacin, ferrous sulfate, thiamine, riboflavin, folic acid] eggs, egg whites, wheat gluten, glyceryl), carrots, chicken (white chicken meat, water, modified food starch, salt, sodium phosphates), peas, chicken fat, cornstarch, potato starch, salt, hydrolyzed corn protein, non-fat dry milk, green peppers, red peppers, tomato paste, sugar, flavorings, spices

Nutrient	Free	Low	Reduced/less
Calories	Less than 5 calories	70 calories or less	At least 25% fewer calories
Sugars	Less than 0.5 grams sugars	No definition established for this term	At least 25% less sugars
Saturated fat	Less than 0.5 grams of saturated fat and less than 0.5 grams of trans fats	1 gram or less per serving and less than 15% or less of calories from saturated fats	At least 25% or less
Cholesterol	Less than 2 mg	20 mg or less	At least 25% less cholesterol
Sodium	Less than 5 mg	140 mg or less	At least 25% less

A product must be reduced by a specific amount of sugar or fat to claim they are “free” or “low,” as they may be misleading. Use the ingredient list and the nutrition facts label to make your selections.

All definitions are **for the serving size listed** on the nutrition facts label. Definitions for reduced/less are in comparison to the standard product.

Ingredient list:

- Is always printed on the outside of the package
- Identifies all the ingredients in the food item
- Lists ingredients according to the amount of the ingredient in the package starting with the largest

Be aware that many manufacturers use several ingredients that serve the same purpose. For example, honey, maltose, and fructose are all separate ingredients. They all are considered sugars. Ingredients with a similar base will accumulate: salt, sodium citrate, and sodium bicarbonate. These are different ingredients, however they all have a sodium base and will increase the overall level of sodium in the food.

Commonly used food sugars

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Corn syrup• Honey• Corn sweeteners• Molasses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High fructose corn syrup• Natural sweetener• Invert sugar• Maltodextrin	Words ending in “-ose” <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dextrose• Lactose• Fructose• Maltose• Sucrose
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Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 2/3 cup (55g)
 Servings Per Container About 8

Amount Per Serving

Calories 230 Calories from Fat 72

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 8g	12%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 160mg	7%
Total Carbohydrate 37g	12%
Dietary Fiber 4g	16%
Sugars 1g	
Protein 3g	
Vitamin A	10%
Vitamin C	8%
Calcium	20%
Iron	45%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily value 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

Nutrition Facts

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

Amount per serving

Calories **230**

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 8g	12%
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 235mg	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.

Nutrition facts label:

- Lists the nutrient content of a specific portion of food
- Helps you decide on food choices based on nutritional values
 - General guideline for use of % DV (percent Daily Value)
 - 5% or less is low
 - 20% or more is high
- Allows comparison of foods and their nutrients
- Helps you individualize your food choices

Points to remember when using the nutrition facts label

- Check the portion sizes; remember the amount of a nutrient given is for a specific portion size and you may actually be eating more or less of the food.
- Do not rely only on the terms such as “no added sugar”, “low-carb”, “reduced fat”, and others; these terms can be misleading. You will need to compare the specially labeled foods to a similar regular food to make the best choice.
- Know which nutrients you need to be most concerned about. Ask your dietitian for specific guidelines on what you need to watch for on food labels.
- Just because a food is diet does not mean it can be used as desired. Many special “diet” foods are high in calories, fats, carbohydrates, or sodium and may not be the best fit in your meal plan.

Free foods

Foods that contain 5 grams or less carbohydrate and are 20 calories or less are free. (Limit to a total of 60 calories a day.)

Sweeteners

Two types of sweeteners based on calories

- Nutritive - provides calories
- Nonnutritive - provides no calories

Nutritive sweeteners

Simple sugars such as: sucrose (table sugar) and fructose (fruit sugar) are the most commonly used nutritive sweeteners.

Sucrose

- Includes common products such as syrups, honey, brown sugar
- Can be used by people who have diabetes, however it is a very concentrated source of carbohydrate
- Will raise blood glucose levels

Fructose

- Naturally occurring sweetener
- Made from cornstarch
- Two forms
 - Crystalline form
 - Raises blood glucose more slowly than table sugar
 - Expensive
 - High fructose corn syrup
 - Raises blood glucose at the same rate as table sugar
 - Inexpensive
 - Limit use due to its affect on blood glucose

Sugar alcohols (polyols)

- Naturally occurring products used as sweeteners
- Contain about half the calories of regular sugar
- Common sugar alcohols are sorbitol, mannitol, xylitol, and erythritol
- Raise blood glucose more slowly than table sugar
- If eaten in larger portions can cause bloating, cramping, and diarrhea
- Many foods containing sugar alcohols can be high in calories and fats
- Listed under Total carbohydrate on the food label
- Generally should not be subtracted from the total carbohydrate count; if a serving contains more than 5 grams of sugar alcohol, subtract half of the sugar alcohol content from the total carbohydrate amount

Non-nutritive sweeteners – “sugar substitutes”

- Contain little, if any, calories
- Will not raise blood glucose levels
- Are approved for use by Food & Drug Administration

Generic Name	Examples of Common Brands
Saccharin	Sweet' N Low® Sugar Twin®
Aspartame	Nutra Sweet® Equal®
Acesulfame potassium	Sunette® Sweet One®
Sucralose	Splenda®
Stevia	Sweet Leaf® Pure Via® Tru Via® Sun Crystals®
Stevia and Erythritol	Swerve® can substitute for sugar when baking, equal amounts.
Neotame	Not available as a tabletop sweetener; will see in ingredient list of commercial foods

See Section H for food preparation information.

Shopping guide

Make a shopping list before you buy groceries to help in menu planning. Develop a list that follows your favorite grocery store layouts to save you time and money.

Shopping Guide (Focused on Low-Fat Choices)		
<p>Canned goods aisle</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit, unsweetened <input type="checkbox"/> Fruit juice <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables <input type="checkbox"/> Vegetable juice* <input type="checkbox"/> Mushrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Water chestnuts <input type="checkbox"/> Tomato sauce* and paste* <input type="checkbox"/> Tomatoes* <input type="checkbox"/> Beans (kidney, pinto, northern garbanzo, black, black-eyed peas)* <input type="checkbox"/> Broth based soups* <input type="checkbox"/> Bouillon* <input type="checkbox"/> Dried soups* <input type="checkbox"/> No-fat or low-fat cream soups* <input type="checkbox"/> Evaporated skim milk <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna canned in water <input type="checkbox"/> Peanut butter 	<p>Meat aisle (Lower fat preferred)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken <input type="checkbox"/> Turkey <input type="checkbox"/> Fish <input type="checkbox"/> Round or sirloin steak <input type="checkbox"/> Ground round or sirloin <input type="checkbox"/> Beef round roast <input type="checkbox"/> Flank steak <input type="checkbox"/> Leg of lamb <input type="checkbox"/> Lean lamb chops <input type="checkbox"/> Pork loin roast <input type="checkbox"/> Pork tenderloin <input type="checkbox"/> Center loin pork chop <input type="checkbox"/> Ham* <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian bacon* <input type="checkbox"/> Tofu <input type="checkbox"/> 97% fat-free lunch meat*, hot dogs*, or sausage* 	<p>Fresh vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Broccoli <input type="checkbox"/> Cabbage <input type="checkbox"/> Carrots <input type="checkbox"/> Cauliflower <input type="checkbox"/> Celery <input type="checkbox"/> Corn <input type="checkbox"/> Cucumber <input type="checkbox"/> Green pepper <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce/salad greens <input type="checkbox"/> Mushrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Onions <input type="checkbox"/> Potatoes <input type="checkbox"/> Rutabagas <input type="checkbox"/> Squash <input type="checkbox"/> Tomatoes

*High sodium choice

Shopping Guide (Focused on Low-Fat Choices)

Fresh fruit

- Apples
- Bananas
- Berries
- Cantaloupe
- Grapefruit
- Oranges
- Peaches
- Pears
- Strawberries
- Watermelon

Dairy aisle

- Fat-free skim milk
- Yogurt plain or with fruit artificially sweetened and fat-free, or low-fat
- Cheese (reduced-fat)*
- Cottage cheese (low-fat)*
- Margarine
- Eggs

Bakery aisle

(Whole grains preferred)

- Bread
- Angel food cake
- Sponge cake
- Rolls
- Hamburger/hotdog buns
- Bagels
- English muffins/muffins
- Pita bread
- Tortillas

Starch aisle

(Whole grains preferred)

- Whole-grain flour
- Plain dry cereals
- Plain cooked cereals
- Noodles/macaroni
- Rice (brown for more fiber)
- Dried beans
- Dried peas
- Graham crackers
- Saltine crackers
- Low-fat crackers
- Pretzels*
- Popcorn

Special products

- Artificial sweeteners
- Artificially sweetened jam/jelly
- Artificially sweetened pudding
- Artificially sweetened Jell-O®
- Artificially sweetened syrup
- Butter Buds®
- Nonstick cooking spray
- Salt-free seasonings
- Diet soft drinks
- Salad dressing (lite or no-fat*)
- Vinegar

Frozen food aisle

- Fruit, unsweetened
- Vegetables, plain
- Dinners, low-fat*
- Waffles
- Juices

Miscellaneous

- Catsup
- Canola oil
- Lemon juice
- Mayonnaise (lite or non-fat)
- Mustard
- Olive oil
- Spices and herbs

*High sodium choice

Money saving tips

Saving money at the grocery store will require some planning and perhaps a little more time shopping. Make a shopping list before you buy groceries to help in menu planning.

Before shopping

- Plan a basic menu for the week.
- Shop only with a list; arrange your shopping list according to store lay-out.
- Check grocery ads for sale items and the newspaper inserts for coupons.
- Clip the coupons and attach to your shopping list; clip only coupons of items you usually use or are a healthy new choice.
- Eat before you go shopping; shopping when you are hungry tends to increase impulse buying.

While shopping

- Try to do most of your shopping once a week; limit return visits to buying produce and dairy items.
- Buy only items you really need, unless something you use often is on sale.
- If an item you use often is on sale and it can be stored, consider buying enough for a few weeks.
- Compare discounted items with similar products at regular price to see if you really are saving.
- Check unit pricing (the price per ounce or pound, usually listed on the shelf below the item); this helps you compare sizes and brands, to decide which is the least expensive cost per ounce.
- Look for store brands or generic brands, they are often less expensive than national brands.
- Buy only the amount you will use; an item that costs less per serving will not save money if it spoils.



Cost Per Ounce Prepared

Less Expensive		More Expensive	
Grains			
Bread		Bagels	
Brown rice		Waffles, frozen	
Rice		Packaged instant oats	
Rolled oats		Boxed pasta meal	
Barley		Boxed rice mixes	
Pasta		Crackers	
Corn meal		Packaged cereals	
Pancake mix		Cereal bars	
		Granola bars	
Fruit - Vegetables			
Fresh vegetables		Frozen vegetables (name brand)	
Canned vegetables		Frozen mashed potatoes	
Frozen vegetables (store brand)		Potato chips	
Canned fruit		Instant mashed potatoes	
		Ready lettuce/salad greens	
		Individual packaged servings	
		Juice boxes	
Dairy			
Milk		Gourmet cheeses	
Yogurt		Processed cheeses	
Cottage cheese		Individually wrapped cheese slices	
Block cheese			
Proteins			
Beans, dried		Ground beef	Beef stew meat
Eggs		Bologna	Fresh fish
Whole turkey		Hot dogs	Lamb
Whole chicken		Ham	Deli meat
Peanut butter		Bacon	
Ground turkey			
Tuna			

Points to remember

- Prepared foods cost more than the plain ingredients from which they are made.
- Plain cereal costs less per ounce than sugar coated cereal.
- Whole-unwashed produce usually costs less than washed and cut up items.
- Buying salad makings at the store salad bar might be less expensive than buying all the various items separately – especially for one or two people.
- Limit use of pickles, relishes and olives; they are high in cost but low in nutrients.
- Limit use of chips, cookies, ice cream, and other processed food. They may be low in cost, but they are high in calories and low in nutrients.

