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Questions & Answers About the Updated Nutrition Facts Label

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We have been seeing the Nutrition Facts label printed on most food products since 1994. With advances in nutrition research, we have new recommendations.

In 2016, the Food and Drug Administration updated its rules for nutrition labeling on packaged foods. Large manufacturers (more than $10 million in sales) were required to switch to the new label by 2020. Smaller food manufacturers were allowed until 2021 to comply. Some small businesses are exempt from nutrition labeling.

This handout identifies key changes in the Nutrition Facts label. The goal of Nutrition Facts labels is to allow consumers to make informed decisions about the food they buy.

Q: What is the history of nutrition labeling on foods?

Before the 1960s, little if any nutrition information was present on food packages. Between the mid-1940s and 1960s, the food was considered "for special dietary uses" if calories or sodium values were listed.

More processed food (mixes, etc.) appeared in grocery store shelves in the 1960s. As nutrition researchers linked diet with various diseases, a need for informing consumers emerged. By 1973, many food packages showed calories, protein, carbohydrate, fat and percent of the daily recommendation for vitamins A, C, thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and the minerals calcium and iron.

Two key reports regarding diet and health appeared in the late 1980s. In response, the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 was passed and covered foods overseen by the Food and Drug Administration. By 1994, consumers began seeing Nutrition Facts labels on most foods.

Q: Did any changes occur on the 1994 Nutrition Facts labels before 2020?

"Trans fat" was added to nutrition labels in 2006. Trans fats are created in an industrial process that adds hydrogen to liquid vegetable oils to make them more solid at room temperature. Trans fats may raise your bad (LDL) cholesterol levels and lower your good (HDL) cholesterol levels. Increased cholesterol buildup, or plaque, increases your risk of developing heart disease.

Q: What are the key changes to the Nutrition Facts label?

The number of calories per serving is the largest item on the label. Calories from fat is not on the label. You will note that serving size is in a larger, bolder font to attract your attention. Serving sizes were updated to be more realistic to what people actually eat. For example, a serving of cereal is now 1 cup, where it used to be ¾ cup.

Calcium and iron values remain on labels, but vitamins A and C are not required on Nutrition Facts labels. Most people meet the daily recommendations for these vitamins. Potassium and Vitamin D now appear on most labels (unless the package qualifies for simplified labeling).

"Added sugar" now is required on labels. Added sugars are sugars not present naturally in the food.

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"Total Sugars" includes natural sugars such as lactose in milk plus added sugar such as corn syrup.

Although the example labels are for the same food, you will note that the Percent Daily Value (%DV) differs in some cases. The %Daily Value (DV) shows how a serving of the food contributes to your daily diet. As shown in Table 1, some daily values were updated to reflect current nutrition research.

For more information

about nutrition labeling, see **www.fda.gov**.

See **www.ag.ndsu.edu/food** for more information about nutrition and health.

Original Label

Nutrition Facts

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

Amount Per Serving

Calories 230	Calories from Fat 70
	% 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 12g	
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

New Label

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.

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Table 1. Changes in Daily Value (DV) on 2020 Nutrition Facts Labels.

Nutrient	Old DV Age 4 or older	New DV Age 4 or older	New DV Change
Fat (g)	65	78	↑
Fat (g)	65	78	↑
Saturated fat (g)	20	20	Same
Cholesterol (mg)	300	300	Same
Total carbs (g)	300	275	↓
Sodium (mg)	2,400	2,300	↓
Dietary fiber (g)	25	28	↑
Protein (g)	50	50	Same
Added sugars (g)	N/A	50	New
Vitamin D (mcg)	400 IU (10 mcg)	20 mcg	↑
Calcium (mg)	1,000	1,300	↑
Iron (mg)	18	18	Same
Potassium (mg)	3,500	4,700	↑

Test Your Knowledge

According to the new Nutrition Facts label example above,

a. what is the % Daily Value (DV) for vitamin D? _____%

b. what is the % DV for potassium? _____%

c. what is the % DV for total carbohydrate? _____%

d. Which label shows added sugars? _____

e. How much added sugar is present? _____ grams

Answers: a. 10; b. 6; c. 13; d. New; e. 10

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