

How to Read a Nutrition Facts Label With Focus on Achieving a Healthy Weight

There are many ‘lessons’ to learn in reading a food label- serving sizes, calories, fat, and nutrients like fiber, calcium and sugars. In weight loss or maintenance the first thing to learn is what is a serving size for a certain food.

2% Milk

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (236 ml)			
Servings Per Container 1			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 120		Calories From Fat 45	
% Daily Value			
Total Fat	5 g		8%
Saturated Fat	3 g		15%
Trans Fat	0 g		
Cholesterol	20 mg		7%
Sodium	120 mg		5%
Total Carbohydrate	11 g		4%
Fiber	0 g		0%
Sugars	11 g		
Protein	9 g		
Vitamin A			10%
Vitamin C			4%
Calcium			30%
Iron			4%
Vitamin D			25%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calories diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.			
		Calories:	2000 2500
Total Fat	Less Than	65 g	80 g
Sat Fat	Less Than	20 g	25 g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300 mg	300 mg
Sodium	Less Than	2400 mg	2400 mg
Total Carbohydrate		300 g	375 g
Fiber		25 g	30 g

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The 1st ‘lesson’ is to focus on what a serving size is for that food.

Controlling portions and choosing foods with less calories per serving is key in achieving a healthy weight.

****For this example, in the same 1 cup serving, skim milk has less calories and a lot less fat than 2% milk. For a healthy weight, skim milk would be the better choice.**

Skim Milk

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (236 ml)			
Servings Per Container 1			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 80		Calories From Fat 0	
% Daily Value			
Total Fat	0 g		0%
Saturated Fat	0 g		0%
Trans Fat	0 g		
Cholesterol	20 mg		5%
Sodium	120 mg		5%
Total Carbohydrate	11 g		4%
Fiber	0 g		0%
Sugars	11 g		
Protein	9 g		
Vitamin A			10%
Vitamin C			4%
Calcium			30%
Iron			0%
Vitamin D			25%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2000 calories diet. Your Daily Values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.			
		Calories:	2000 2500
Total Fat	Less Than	65 g	80 g
Sat Fat	Less Than	20 g	25 g
Cholesterol	Less Than	300 mg	300 mg
Sodium	Less Than	2400 mg	2400 mg
Total Carbohydrate		300 g	375 g
Fiber		25 g	30 g

- Another “label lesson” is when shopping for cereal, breads or whole grains (like crackers and cereal bars) look at the “Total Carbohydrate” section for:
 - Less than 12 grams of sugar
 - More than 2-3 grams of fiber