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A Leaders Guide to the New Food Label
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A LEADER'S GUIDE

TO THE

NEW FOOD LABEL



TARGET FAT

This leader guide provides background information on the new food label. It is intended to help you use the bulletin E-2514 "Target Fat" to teach the label as it relates to fat in the diet. Additional activities and resources are suggested for teaching people how to read the new label.

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Food and Drug Administration



What is the new food label?

- The Food and Drug Administration announced regulations that created a new food label. The United States Department of Agriculture is adopting the same rules to make it easier for consumers to make informed food choices. Since nutrition labeling was first introduced in 1973, research has shown many relationships between nutrition and long-term health. The new food label focuses on many nutrients related to health conditions.

When will the new food label be available?

- The new food label is already on supermarket shelves. The Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990 requires that almost all foods carry the new labels by August, 1994.

How can I tell if it is a new label?

- The title "Nutrition Facts" at the top of the nutrition information panel tells you that it is the new food label.

What is "new" about the new food label?

- For the first time, almost all processed and packaged products will have to provide nutrition information.
- Consumers can more easily compare products because serving sizes for similar types of products are defined in the regulations. The information on the label will reflect an average portion. (These average portions are not always the same as the serving sizes given in the Food Guide Pyramid.)

- You can believe the claims on the package. Descriptor terms such as "low in," a "good source of," "reduced," "lite" and "high" are now defined and regulated. Health claims that link a certain nutrient to a specific disease are also defined and regulated based on current scientific knowledge.
- Different nutrients are printed in bold on the new food label. Calories, total fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrate and protein are bolded. Saturated fat, dietary fiber and sugars are also listed. The four vitamins and minerals most lacking in the American diet are listed (vitamin A, calcium, vitamin C, iron).
- The new label allows you to compare foods to the suggested daily references (Daily Values) for nutrients.

What are daily values?

- Daily values are the new reference numbers on the food label. They are based on a 2,000-calorie diet and are determined using current nutrition recommendations. Daily values are meant for adults and children over the age of four.

How can I use the % Daily Value?

- By using the % Daily Value, consumers can quickly determine if a product is higher or lower in a nutrient than a similar product. Select products by comparing the % Daily Values. If you want to lower the fat in the diet, compare products and select the foods with the lower percentage. If you want to increase the fiber in the diet, choose food with a higher % Daily Value. % Daily Values can be used to make dietary trade-offs. If you have a favorite food that is high in fat, watch the % Daily Values to choose lower fat choices for other foods that day.



- Percent (%) Daily Value shows how a food fits into the overall daily diet. For some nutrients, 100% of the Daily Value may not be a requirement. For instance, a person can think of 100% of the Daily Value for fat, saturated fat, cholesterol, and sodium to be a maximum daily goal.

What are the approved health claims?

- Health claims are approved by FDA when sufficient scientific evidence supports the claim. The number of health claims may increase as advances are made in nutritional science. The current approved health claims are related to:
 - calcium and osteoporosis
 - sodium and hypertension (high blood pressure)
 - dietary fat and cancer
 - dietary saturated fat and cholesterol and the risk of coronary heart disease
 - fiber – containing grain products, fruits and vegetables, and cancer
 - fruits, vegetables and grain products that contain fiber, particularly soluble fiber, and risk of coronary heart disease
 - fruits and vegetables and cancer

Will there be food labels on foods that are not processed?

- Nutrition information currently is voluntary for many raw foods, including the 20 most frequently eaten fresh fruits, fresh vegetables and raw fish. Labeling will also be voluntarily provided for 45 of the best-selling cuts of meat and poultry. If voluntary compliance is insufficient, nutrition information for such raw foods will become mandatory.

Where can I find more information on the new food label?

- For more information and ideas for educating consumers on the food label contact:
 - your county Extension office
 - FDA Public Affairs Specialists
 - the FDA/USDA Food Labeling Education Information Center (resources only) 1-301-504-5719
 - The American Dietetic Association National Center for Nutrition and Dietetics 1-800-366-1655
 - FDA Seafood Hotline 1-800-332-4010
 - USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline 1-800-535-4555

Ideas For Food Labeling Activities

- Bring several books with nutrient values for reference when using activities in **Target Fat (Bulletin E-2514)**. **Nutritive Value of Foods (Home and Garden Bulletin 72)** is available from your local Extension office.
- Substitute different nutrients for fat in the activities in **Target Fat**.
- Bring several samples of new nutrition labels from similar types of products. See how many differences there are between the foods. Note: Products such as ice cream, ketchup and mayonnaise used to have standards of identity which exempted them from ingredient labeling. The new laws require ingredient labeling for these products.
- Take a grocery store tour to compare brands using the new food labels.



- Have a scavenger hunt in the grocery store. Divide in groups and provide each group with a nutrient found on the food label. Have each group make a list of foods that total 100% of the Daily Value for the nutrient provided. Have the groups tell the others what they found.
- Solve the food label puzzle below. Make a copy of the food label puzzle. Cut along the lines, distribute the pieces and put the food label puzzle together. Have everyone describe their pieces of the food label.

Food Label Puzzle

Canned Peaches in Light Syrup

New heading signals a new label. →

More consistent serving sizes, in both household and metric measures, replace those that used to be set by manufacturers. →

Nutrients required on nutrition panel are those most important to the health of today's consumers, most of whom need to worry about getting too much of certain items (fat, for example), rather than too few vitamins or minerals, as in the past. []

Conversion guide helps consumers learn caloric value of the energy-producing nutrients. →

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size ½ cup (124 g)
Servings 3½

Amount Per Serving
Calories 50 Calories from Fat 0

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 0g	0%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 10mg	0%
Total Carbohydrate 15g	5%
Dietary Fiber 1g	4%
Sugars 14g	
Protein 0g	

Vitamin A 6%	Vitamin C 8%
Calcium 0%	* Iron 2%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-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	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Fiber		25g	38g

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

New, mandatory component helps consumers meet dietary guidelines recommending no more than 30 percent of calories from fat. ←

% Daily Value shows how a food fits into the overall daily diet. ←

Reference values help consumers learn good diet basics. They can be adjusted, depending on a person's calorie needs. ←