

Learning the label lingo

Calories and calories from fat



Healthy eating is easier, thanks to the nutrition label. Most foods in the grocery store must have a Nutrition Facts label and an ingredient list. Read the nutrition label to help choose foods that make up a healthy diet. For example, too much fat and cholesterol can raise blood cholesterol, a risk factor for heart disease. Too much sodium may be linked to high blood pressure in some people, a risk factor for heart attack and stroke.

Watch total calorie content

An important component of the Nutrition Facts label is the calorie content. The number of calories in a single serving is listed on the left of the label. You should pay attention to calories—if you eat more calories than your body uses, you will likely gain weight. If the serving is listed as calorie-free, the food or beverage must have less than five calories.

Limit your calories from fat

Another label fundamental is the number of calories that come from fat. Checking this can help you limit your fat intake. Too much fat may contribute to heart disease and cancer. The label gives you the number of fat grams per serving (so you can track your daily intake) and the number of calories from fat. If you are trying to lose weight, your goal is an overall intake of no more than 20 to 25 percent of your total calories from fat.

Too many calories and calories from fat don't have to trip you up. Learn to read food labels as a good first step to a sensible eating plan.



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