

6 Ways to Crack a Nutrition Label

#1. Serving Size.

Be sure to check this out first thing! The nutrition label will tell you the size of a single serving, as well as the number of servings per container. That way you know if your drink will be enough for you...or for your entire friend group.

#2. Calories.

We all have different calorie needs based on our size, age, and activity level. When looking at the calories on a nutrition label, consider the healthful nutrients in the food as well. For example, a glass of juice has the same number of calories as a turkey sandwich on whole-grain bread. In this case, it would be beneficial to choose the sandwich which is packed with protein and fiber, over the juice that contains added sugars and no other notable nutrients.

#3. Nutrients to Limit.

Many times we don't realize foods we choose are packed with not-so-healthy nutrients, like sodium, fat, and cholesterol. Our bodies need these nutrients to function, however, we generally get plenty in our regular diets. It's a good idea to limit the nutrients in this section.

#6. Daily Diet Guidelines.

The area at the bottom of most nutrition labels has suggestions for how much of certain nutrients you should eat on a daily basis. However, the guidelines are based on a 2,000 and 2,500 calorie diet which isn't appropriate for everyone. This is why it is important to understand your own nutritional needs and apply them when you're checking out nutrition labels!

Nutrition Facts			
Serving Size 1 cup (242g)			
Servings Per Container 2			
Amount Per Serving			
Calories 220		Calories from Fat 110	
		% Daily Value	
Total Fat	12g		18%
Saturated Fat	3g		15%
Trans Fat	3g		
Cholesterol	30mg		10%
Sodium	470mg		20%
Potassium	700mg		20%
Total Carbohydrates	31g		10%
Dietary Fiber	0g		0%
Sugars	5g		
Protein	5g		
Vitamin A			4%
Vitamin C			2%
Calcium			20%
Iron			4%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your caloric needs.			
		Calories	2,000 2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	60g
Sat Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrates		300g	300g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

#5. Nutrients to Increase.

Some good-for-you nutrients like vitamins, minerals, iron, and fiber are packed with health benefits but are often lacking in our diets. It's always a good idea to eat plenty of foods that are high in these - especially fruits and vegetables.

#4. Daily Value Percentages

The percentages in this column show how much of each nutrient are in one serving in relation to how much you need for the day. For example, this food contains 20% of your daily calcium needs in one serving which means you've already eaten a fifth of your calcium for the day. When using this trick, keep in mind that it is based on a 2,000 calorie diet.