

# Understanding Nutrition Labelling

Nutrition labelling is a tool designed to help you make healthy food choices. In Canada, a Nutrition Facts table and an ingredient list must appear on food labels.

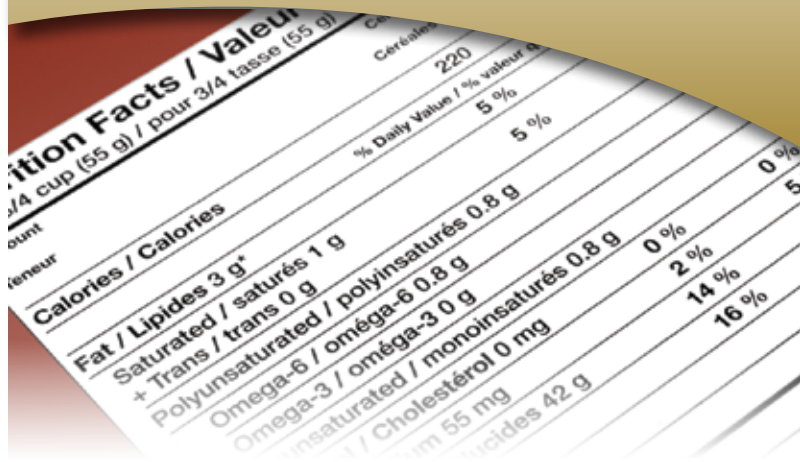
**The Nutrition Facts table** includes the number of calories, the amounts of 13 nutrients essential to your health, and their % Daily Value (% DV) for a specified quantity of food. This information can be used to compare similar foods (e.g., two kinds of cereal) to identify the healthier option. It can also be used to find foods that contain more of a desirable nutrient like fibre or calcium, or to find foods that contain lower amounts of less desirable nutrients like trans fat and sodium. Lastly, the information found in the Nutrition Facts table can be used to choose foods for special diets. For example, individuals with high blood pressure may use it to keep track of the amount of sodium they consume.

**The ingredient list** is useful when you want to avoid a certain food because of an allergy, intolerance, health concern or belief.

## Tips on reading the Nutrition Facts table

- The Nutrition Facts table looks similar on all food labels, making it easier to find and to read.
- Keep in mind that nutritional information is based on the amount of food indicated near the top of the Nutrition Facts table. Always compare this amount to the amount you eat. Also be aware that the indicated amount is not necessarily a recommended serving size as per Canada's Food Guide.
- The % DV tells you how much of the daily recommended amount of a certain nutrient is contained in a specific amount of food. As

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a rule of thumb, 5% DV or less is a little and 15% DV or more is a lot. The % DV can be used to select products that have a higher content of the nutrients you want more of.

## Tips on reading the ingredient list

- The ingredient list is usually found near the Nutrition Facts table.
- Ingredients are always listed in order of weight, starting with the ingredient present in the greatest amount.
- Some ingredients may appear under many different and sometimes unfamiliar names. For example, sugars can be listed as cane juice extract, corn syrup, glucose, sucrose, etc. Words ending in "ose" are usually sugars.

## For more information, consult:

- a Registered Dietician
- [www.dietitians.ca](http://www.dietitians.ca)

Source: Health Canada [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

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