### Serving Size

Check to see if your serving is the same size as the one on the label. If you eat double the serving size listed, you need to double the nutrient and caloric values. If you eat one-half the serving size shown here, the nutrient and caloric values should be halved.

### Calories

Calories provide a measure of how much energy you get from a serving of food. The calorie section of the label can help you manage your weight. Eating too many calories per day may cause weight gain or obesity. A person's size and activity level help to determine total calories needed per day.

### Total Carbohydrates

Carbohydrates are found in foods such as bread, potatoes, fruits, milk, vegetables, and sweets. Carbohydrates are the main source of energy for body functions. Talk to your healthcare provider/dietitian about the amount of carbohydrates to have in your meal plan.

### Dietary Fiber

It is important to consume foods containing fiber from a wide variety of sources. Fruits, vegetables, whole-grain foods, beans, and legumes are all good sources of fiber and can help lower cholesterol and thus reduce the risk of heart disease. Consumption of at least 25 grams per day is recommended.

### Sugars

Labels will indicate the grams of sugars in a food—both the natural and added sugars. If you are concerned about your intake of sugars, make sure sugar is not listed as one of the first few ingredients. Other names for sugar include: corn syrup, high-fructose corn syrup, fruit juice concentrate, maltose, dextrose, sucrose, honey, and maple syrup. Talk to your healthcare provider/dietitian about the use of sugar in your meal plan.

### Vitamins and Minerals

Vitamins and minerals are also important to a well-balanced diet. Make it your goal to get 100% of each every day.

### Total Fat

Try to limit your calories from fat. Too much fat may contribute to heart disease and cancer. Choose foods with less than 30% of calories derived from fat.

### Saturated Fat

Saturated fat is a “bad” fat. It is a key player in raising LDL (bad) cholesterol and your risk of heart disease, a leading cause of death in the United States. Health experts recommend you keep your intake of saturated fat as low as possible as part of a nutritionally balanced diet.

### Trans Fat

Scientific reports link trans fat with raising LDL cholesterol levels, which increases your risk of heart disease, a leading cause of death in the United States. Health experts recommend you keep your intake of trans fat as low as possible as part of a nutritionally balanced diet.

### Cholesterol

Challenge yourself to eat foods totaling less than 300 mg of cholesterol a day. Too much cholesterol can lead to heart disease. Cholesterol is found in foods of animal origin, such as meat, fish, eggs, and whole-milk products, such as cheese and butter. Certain foods products that contain plant stanols/sterols (for example, cholesterol-lowering margarine) can also help lower cholesterol.

### Sodium

Too much sodium (salt) adds up to high blood pressure in some people. Sodium intake should be 2,400 mg per day, or even lower depending on your health. Talk to your healthcare provider/dietitian about the amount of sodium you should have in your diet.

### Protein

Most adults get more protein than they need. Even though protein from animal sources such as meat, fish, milk, and cheese is of higher nutritional quality than plant-based protein, it is also higher in fat—especially saturated fat and cholesterol. Use skim or low-fat milk, yogurt, and cheese. Try to get some protein from vegetables (such as beans), grains, and cereals.

### Daily Values

These daily values are based on a 2,000 or 2,500 calorie diet. Speak with your healthcare provider/dietitian to determine your specific calorie needs.

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**Understanding Food Nutrition Labels**

**Nutrition Facts**

- **Serving Size:** 1/2 cup (114 g)
- **Amount Per Serving**
  - Calories: 90
  - Calories from Fat: 56
  - Total Fat: 3 g
  - Saturated Fat: 0 g
  - Trans Fat: 0 g
  - Cholesterol: 0 mg
  - Sodium: 300 mg
  - Total Carbohydrate: 13 g
  - Dietary Fiber: 3 g
  - Sugars: 3 g
  - Protein: 3 g

- **% Daily Value**:
  - Total Fat: 5%
  - Saturated Fat: 0%
  - Trans Fat: 0%
  - Cholesterol: 0%
  - Sodium: 13%
  - Total Carbohydrate: 4%
  - Dietary Fiber: 12%
  - Sugars: 12%
  - Protein: 6%

- **Vitamin A:** 80%
- **Vitamin C:** 6%
- **Calcium:** 4%
- **Iron:** 5%

* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000-calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calories</th>
<th>2,000</th>
<th>2,500</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fat</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat. Fat</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cholesterol</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sodium</td>
<td>Less</td>
<td>Less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Carbohydrate</td>
<td>300 g</td>
<td>375 g</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiber</td>
<td>25 g</td>
<td>30 g</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Additional nutrients may be listed on some food labels.**

- **g = grams (about 28 g = 1 ounce)**
- **mg = milligrams (1,000 mg = 1 g)**

**This information comes from the US Food and Drug Administration website:**

http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/foodlab.html