

# Smart Choices

## Nutrition News for Seniors

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### Label Reading 101

Food labels have been around for many years and have undergone several changes over that time. Making sense of the information on the food label can at times become confusing. So let's take a look at the basics of label reading 101.

The first piece of information that you will want to look at is the serving size because everything on the label is based upon this serving size. This will tell you how much food is provided in a serving. Keep in mind that the serving size given may be different than the USDA recommended serving size for this food item. Serving sizes on the label are based upon general amounts from a manufacturer's point of view.

The second thing you will want to pay attention to is the number of servings per container or package. There may be more than one serving in the package. If that is the case and you eat the entire package then you would be consuming more calories and nutrients.

Next, the label provides you with the number of calories per serving and how many of those calories come from fat.

The middle section of the label provides you with the nutrient content of the food. The key to this section

Sample Label for Macaroni and Cheese

**Nutrition Facts**

Serving Size 1 cup (228g)  
Servings Per Container 2

Amount Per Serving  
Calories 250      Calories from Fat 110

	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 12g	18%
Saturated Fat 3g	15%
Trans Fat 1.5g	
Cholesterol 30mg	10%
Sodium 470mg	20%
Total Carbohydrate 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 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
Dietary Fiber	25g	30g

**Start Here** (points to Serving Size and Servings Per Container)

**Limit these Nutrients** (points to Total Fat, Saturated Fat, Trans Fat, Cholesterol, Sodium)

**Get Enough of these Nutrients** (points to Dietary Fiber, Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium, Iron)

**Footnote** (points to Percent Daily Values footnote)

**Quick Guide to % DV** (points to % Daily Value column)

**5% or less is low** (points to 0%, 2%, 4% values)

**20% or more is high** (points to 10%, 15%, 20% values)

the diet are dietary fiber, vitamin A, vitamin C, calcium and iron. The % daily values can provide you with a quick way to determine whether or not a food is high or low in a particular nutrient. Making use of the "5 and 20 rule" allows you to see how foods fit into your overall diet. If a food supplies 5% or less of the daily value, it is considered to be low in that nutrient. If it supplies 20% or more then it is considered to be high for that nutrient. Those nutrients that need to be limited need to be nearer the 5%, whereas those nutrients that should be plentiful need to be at 20% or more.

The footnote at the bottom of the label gives guidance as to how much is needed of some key nutrients based upon 2,000 calories.

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## Spinach Raspberry Salad

### Ingredients:

1 package pre-washed baby spinach leaves  
1 (10 ounce) can mandarin oranges, drained  
½ red onion, thinly sliced  
Fat-free raspberry walnut vinaigrette dressing



### Directions:

Toss spinach, oranges and onion together. Lightly dress with dressing and toss. Serve.

Serves: 4 Each serving contains: 36 calories, 0.1 g total fat, 0 g saturated fat, 13.7 g carbohydrates, 2.2 g dietary fiber, 2 g protein, 171mg sodium.

Special Note: Roasted walnuts, pecans or almonds may be added to the salad.

## Nutrient Content Claims

*Definition given is per serving*

### Sugar

**Sugar free** - less than 0.5 gram sugar

**Reduced sugar** - at least 25% less sugars\*

**No added sugar** - no sugars added during processing or packing

### Fat

**Fat free** - less than 0.5 gram of fat

**Low fat** - three grams or less of fat

**Light** - 50% less fat

### Sodium

**Sodium free** - less than 5 milligrams sodium

**Low sodium** - 140 milligrams or less sodium

**Reduced or less sodium** - at least 25% less sodium\*

**Light in sodium** - 50% or less sodium

### Fiber

**High fiber** - 5 grams or more

**Good source of fiber** - 2.5 grams to 4.9 grams

\*as compared with a standard serving size of the traditional food

## What's the Purpose of SNAP?

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program or SNAP is about helping people with limited incomes improve their nutrition for better health and disease prevention. The program is available to all eligible persons. Food Stamp coupons have been replaced by an electronic SNAP card that looks and works just like a typical debit or credit card used by any grocery shopper. This program can help you buy nutritious foods for a better diet. To find out more contact 1-888-LA HELPU or visit [www.dss.state.la.us](http://www.dss.state.la.us).



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References: [eXtension.org](http://eXtension.org) and [lsuagcenter.com](http://lsuagcenter.com)