

Food label reading guide

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Key points:

- Reading food labels can help us make healthy choices.
- Always read the per 100g column on the nutrition information panel (NIP) to compare similar products, as the serve sizes can differ between brands.
- Always compare the nutrition information panel (NIP) or health star rating of similar products, for example compare one brand of yoghurt with another brand of yoghurt.
- The more stars out of five, the healthier the food or drink choice.

Food labels

Reading food and drink labels can help us make healthy choices. Food and drink labels will include information about the product, where and when it was made and a statement of ingredients, as well as any warnings or allergen statements. Most food or drink packages have a Nutrition Information Panel (NIP) which tells you the quantity of various nutrients a product contains per serve and per 100g or 100 ml. The NIP will also provide information on the serve size and the number of servings per packet.

When reading the NIP:

- always read the per 100g column to compare similar products, because the serve sizes differ between brands.
- always compare similar products, for example compare one brand of yoghurt with another brand of yoghurt.

NUTRITION INFORMATION		
Servings per package: 3		
Serving size: 150g		
	Quantity per Serving	Quantity per 100 g
Energy	608 kJ	405 kJ
Protein	4.2 g	2.8 g
Fat, total	7.4 g	4.9 g
– saturated	4.5 g	3.0 g
Carbohydrate, total	18.6 g	12.4 g
– sugars	18.6 g	12.4 g
Sodium	90 mg	60 mg
Calcium	300 mg (38%)*	200 mg

* Percentage of recommended dietary intake

What to look for when reading food and drink labels (per 100g)



Bread

- More than 5g fibre
- Less than 600mg sodium



Meat and alternatives

- Less than 10g total fat
- Less than 3g saturated fat
- Less than 750mg sodium



Breakfast cereal

- More than 6g fibre
- Less than 300mg sodium
- Less than 15g sugar (without dried fruit)



Savoury crackers, crispbreads and crisps

- Less than 10g total fat
- Less than 3g saturated fat
- More than 3g fibre
- Less than 600mg sodium



Milk and yoghurt

- Less than 2g total fat
- Less than 1.5g saturated fat
- Less than 15g sugar
- More than 150mg calcium



Sweet snack bars and biscuits

- Less than 10g total fat
- Less than 3g saturated fat
- Less than 15g sugar
- More than 3g fibre
- Less than 400mg sodium



Cheese

- Compare products and choose the one with the lowest total fat, saturated fat and sodium levels.
- Even reduced fat cheese will contain approximately 25% fat



Fats and oils

- Choose monounsaturated and polyunsaturated margarines and oils instead of butter
- 'Lite' oils are not necessarily lower in fat
- 'Vegetable blend' oils can still be high in saturated fat

Health Star Ratings

The Health Star Rating is a front of pack labelling scheme which can be used to make healthier food choices at a glance. The rating range is from ½ – 5 stars and the more stars, the healthier the choice.

Recommended minimum star ratings for food and drink categories

<p>Breakfast cereals</p>  	<p>Sweet snack foods e.g. muesli bars, biscuits</p>  	<p>Crumbed and battered meats e.g. chicken nuggets, fish fingers</p>  
<p>Liquid breakfast drinks</p>  	<p>Savoury snack foods e.g. crackers, pretzels, crispbread</p>  	<p>Dips e.g. hommus, tzatziki, salsa</p>  
<p>Yogurt</p>  	<p>Savoury pastries e.g. meat pies, sausage rolls, spring rolls</p>  	<p>Chilled or frozen ready to eat meals</p>  
<p>Canned, chilled soups and dehydrated soups</p>  	<p>Ice-creams, frozen yogurt, custard</p>  	<p>Fruit and vegetable juices</p>  

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- The more stars out of five, the healthier the product choice.

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