Nutrition Labels Revealed

Eat smart with these 7 pointers

If you are like most people then you probably glance at the Nutrition Facts label on foods once in a while. Maybe you check for the number of calories or fat grams that an item contains, or maybe you are watching something specific - like your sodium intake.

Whatever the case, it has been proven that those who pay attention to the Nutrition Facts label end up eating healthier.

The more familiar you are with the Nutritional Facts label, the more likely you will be fit and healthy.

Each Nutritional Facts label has been designed to quickly and efficiently give you all of the important facts about a food item. You just need to know what you are looking for. Read on as we break down the Nutritional Facts label into 7 important facts.

Serving Size

This small detail skews the entire label if you do not read it closely. An item may seem like it is only one serving, but the Nutritional Facts label will consider it to be 2 or 3 servings. If the label says 100 calories, but there are actually 3 servings, then you are getting a total of 300 calories. Pay close attention to what makes a serving. The idea is to hide the negative aspects of the food behind some totally arbitrary quantities selected as a denominator so that the product can pass of as healthy, when in actual fact the real life serving size would make it unhealthy. Producers of most products use this legal loophole to con the public.

Calories

Most people do not have the time to count every calorie that they put in their mouth - this is understandable. However, you probably have

a pretty good idea about the amount of food that you eat each day. When you approach a new item, read the calorie totals on the Nutritional Facts label, and factor the new calories into your daily intake. Steer clear of high calorie items - especially in the form of snack and junk foods.

Fat

By now you have undoubtedly heard that all fats were not created equal. Limit your intake of Trans Fats (also called hydrogenated fats) -- this deadly fat cause many diseases. It also raises LDL cholesterol (the bad one). Remember, all fats were not created equal. Avoid items that are deep fried or items cooked or baked at high temperatures -- in fats no matter what kind of fats it is.

Carbohydrate

Though zero carb diets are losing their momentum, you may have been influenced by the idea that all carbohydrates will make you fat. That is simply not true. It is true, however that some carbohydrates are healthier than others. In fact, medical experts think that excess consumption of refined carbohydrates (such as soda pop, white rice, and white flour) is one of the reasons behind the rise of obesity we see today. Choose fibrous, complex carbohydrates over sugary, simple carbohydrates.

Protein

The fact stands that most of us are getting plenty of protein in our diet. The problem arises when we examine the source of this protein. Meats and dairy products that are high in fat may be filled with protein, but they are not the healthiest form of protein. Choose protein from lean meats, dry beans, poultry, and low fat/fat free dairy products.

The Good Stuff

Directly beneath the protein count on the Nutritional Facts label you will see the percent daily value of Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Calcium and Iron that the food item contains. These numbers are easily overlooked, but hold great importance to your overall health. The more nutrient-rich food items provide you with the greatest benefit per calorie. Compare food brands and choose the most nutrient-rich option.

Evaluate Your Lifestyle

Now that you understand the Nutritional Facts label on your food, you may still have questions about how to change your fitness level. Eating right is just one part of the equation in your quest for a healthy, fit body. Exercise is vastly important as well. Getting proper sleep cannot be over emphasized.