

# Label Reading



## Food and Nutrition labels

There is a lot of information on food labels and at times it can be difficult to determine if a product is healthy or not.

There are 3 types of information on a food label that you can use to help you make a healthy choice:

- Ingredients list
- Nutrient claims or nutrition messages
- Nutrition information panel.

Fresh fruit and vegetables do not have labels but should be included regularly in your diet on a daily basis.

## Ingredients List

Ingredients are listed in descending order by weight. The first ingredient on the list is present in the largest amount, and the last is present in the smallest amount. You will find that things like sugar, fat and salt often have different names on an ingredient list. The table below gives some of their alternative names.

<b>Fat</b>	Oil, shortening, tallow, lard, dripping, cream, copha, milk solids, monoglycerides, diglycerides, butter, margarine.
<b>Sugar</b>	Sucrose, glucose, fructose, maltose, dextrose, lactose, malt extract, molasses, syrup, monosaccharides, mannitol, sorbitol, xylitol, modified carbohydrate.
<b>Salt</b>	Sodium, rock salt, vegetable salt, MSG, yeast extract, stock cube, baking soda, sodium bicarbonate, booster.

## Nutrient Claims

<b>Claim</b>	<b>What it means</b>
<b>Low Joule/Diet</b>	Product is usually low in fat or sugar and often artificially sweetened
<b>No added sugar</b>	No sugar has been added to the product – but may contain other sugars such as lactose (in milk products, fructose in fruit.
<b>Light/Life</b>	Can mean reduced in fat, salt or sugar – but can also mean “light” in colour. You will need to check what the “light” is referring to.
<b>Reduced fat</b>	The total fat content of the product has been reduced by 25% compared to the original/regular product. Reduced fat does not necessarily mean low fat.
<b>Low fat</b>	Has no more than 3g fat per 100g, for solid food. Or 1.5g fat per 100g for liquid.
<b>Fat Free</b>	Total fat of less than 0.15g per 100g of food.
<b>Polyunsaturated or monounsaturated</b>	These are the preferred fats if looking to avoid increases in cholesterol levels. They are still fat and contain the same amount of energy as saturated fats – if you are watching your weight you will need to ensure that your intake of these is kept low.
<b>Cholesterol free</b>	Means there is no cholesterol – however cholesterol only occurs in animal products – so plant products labeled cholesterol free is misleading. Low cholesterol does not always mean low fat.
<b>Natural, fresh or real</b>	There is no standard meaning for these terms – nice for advertising. Wise to check nutrition information panel for content of sugar, fat and salt.
<b>No added salt</b>	Check the nutrition information panel – the food may still contain some salt naturally.
<b>Salt reduced</b>	The salt content has been reduced by 25% compared to the original/regular product. Reduced salt does not necessarily mean low salt.
<b>Low sodium or salt reduced</b>	Contains less than 120mg sodium per 100g.
<b>High fibre</b>	Has more than 3g of dietary fibre per serving. If product contains 6g of fibre per serving it can be labeled “very high in fibre”.
<b>Gluten free</b>	Contains no detectable gluten – for people with Coeliac Disease.
<b>Low GI</b>	If the product has the low GI symbol it indicates that the GI of the product as been measured by an approved facility. Must be low GI and consistent with dietary guidelines for Australians – low in saturated fat, low /moderate in sodium and where appropriate a source of dietary fibre.

## Nutrition Information Panel

The Servings per package tells you how many serves there are in the package based on the standard serve size

Use the per 100g column when comparing different products.

Serve size indicates a standard serve size – compare this to your own serve size.

**Aim for products with less than 10g of fat per 100g.**

Total carbohydrate includes both sugar and starches. Sugar indicates how much of the total carbohydrate is sugar – this includes sugar from fruit (fructose) and milk (lactose).

Total fat indicates the sum of saturated and unsaturated fats. Saturated fat is considered undesirable and should be minimized. If choosing milk or yoghurt aim for <2g of saturated fat per 100g.

Nutrition Information		
Servings per package: 10		
Serve size: 50g		
	Per serve	Per 100g
<b>Energy</b>	703kJ 168cal	1406kJ 336cal
<b>Protein</b>	3.6g	7.1g
<b>Fat</b>	3.7g	7.5g
<b>Saturated</b>	1.7g	3.3g
<b>Carbohydrate</b>		
<b>Total</b>	30.3g	60.5g
<b>Sugars</b>	9.1g	18.2g
<b>Sodium</b>	101mg	201mg
<b>Dietary Fibre</b>	3g	6g

**Aim for less than 10g of sugar per 100g** (If a product contains milk or fruit there may be more than 10g per 100g – having no added sugar in this instance would be more important.)

**A good choice has less than 400mg of sodium per 100g, excellent choices have less than 120mg of sodium per 100g**

**Compare products and choose the one with the highest fibre content.**