

## Ask the Expert:

### How to read the Nutrition Facts Label?

Written by Kaitlan Tracy, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '23

Each food and beverage sold in the U.S. has a nutrition label on the packaging that gives information about what nutrients are in that food. The list below explains how the information is ordered and what each part of the label means to help you choose foods with the nutrients you are looking for.

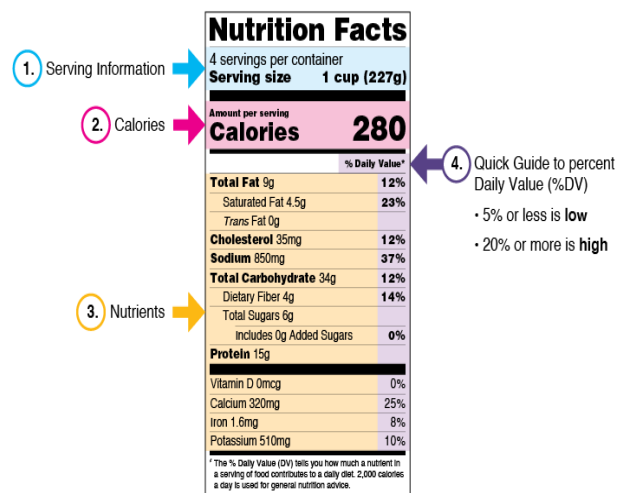
1. **Serving Information** - The first part of the nutrition label provides the serving size as well as how many servings the container holds.

2. **Caloric Information** - The second part of the nutrition label tells you how many calories are in a serving size.

3. **Nutrient Information** - This section shows the nutrients that are in one serving. This includes total fat, saturated fat, trans fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, total sugars, added sugars, and protein. Towards the bottom of the label, the vitamins and minerals in one serving of the food are also shown. Try to choose foods with **less** sodium, added sugars, and saturated fat and with **more** dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.

4. **Daily Value** - Most nutrient values on the nutrition label will have a daily value percentage, which shows how much of each nutrient is added to the diet by eating one serving of the food. The daily value percentage is based on a 2,000 calorie per day diet, so the percentages of the nutrients shown are the amounts that one serving of the food will add if you eat 2,000 calories a day. Remember that if you need more than 2,000 a day you may need more of the nutrients listed and if you need less than 2,000 calories per day, you may need less of the nutrients listed.

For more information on reading nutrients labels, visit <https://www.fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label>.



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## Food Safety: Insects

Written by Adina Miller, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics/ Nutrition, Fitness and Health 2024

There are a lot of important steps in food safety. Lessen the risk of insects and pests in your kitchen by using the tips below.

- Put food away soon after you are finished eating. Food left out might attract insects.
- If you have noticed insects in the kitchen, set up traps to catch and remove them. Also make sure the surfaces are cleaned of crumbs and other substances that may attract insects.
- Take out the trash on a regular basis. The garbage is a good breeding site for flies. Taking out the trash regularly can reduce the risk of flies and fly larva, or maggots, in your kitchen.
- Place a close-fitting lid on the trash can, to keep flies out.
- Sanitize counters, trash lids, and trash cans.
- Store food in tight or sealed containers, to avoid attracting flies.



Sources: <https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/publications/books/housing/cha04.htm> <https://th.bing.com/th/id/OIP.JXNdrLDBs0H3zxkuLQgFfgHaE8?w=290&h=193&c=7&r=0&o=5&pid=1.7>

### Pumpkin Mac & Cheese for One

#### Ingredients (1 serving)

- 3/4 cup cooked pasta\* (any shape)
- 1 1/2 tablespoons cheddar cheese soup (from can)
- 1/8 cup pumpkin puree\*
- 1 1/2 tablespoons milk\*, 1%
- 1 tablespoon cheese\*, low-fat
- 1 teaspoon deli mustard

#### Directions

1. Stir the “wet” ingredients (soup, pumpkin puree, milk, and mustard), and heat in microwave for 45-60 seconds; stir again until creamy.
2. Add cooked pasta to cream and sprinkle cheese on top. Heat another 30-45 seconds or until cheese melts.



#### Nutrition Facts (per serving)

Calories: 213  
Protein: 9g  
Carbs: 38g  
Fat: 3g

Sources: <https://www.myplate.gov/recipes/supplemental-nutrition-assistance-program-snap/pumpkin-mac-cheese-one>, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/tefap/usda-foods-available-list-tefap?msclid=e2c94235aab01|eca7d49d680>

\* foods included in TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program)

## Eating Right: All About Sodium

Written by Emma Sommers, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics '23

The DGA (Dietary Guidelines for Americans) give advice backed up by scientific studies on eating healthy. The advice is updated and reviewed every 5 years to make sure the information is up to date. The DGA recommends eating balanced meals that include vegetables, fruits, protein, whole grains, low-fat dairy, and unsaturated vegetable oils. The DGA also suggests to limit saturated fat, sodium, and added sugars. Follow this link to learn more about the recommendations in the DGA: <https://www.dietaryguidelines.gov/>

Currently, the DGA recommends eating less than 2,300 mg of sodium per day. In the US, we average an intake of 3,400 mg of sodium per day, which is much higher than recommended. Our high sodium intake may be due to many high-sodium foods that are part of a common American diet. Sodium is found in foods from almost all food groups but tends to be present in larger amounts in mixed dishes like pizza, sandwiches, pasta, tacos, soups and other combination dishes.

Lower amounts of sodium are recommended, because there has been evidence that shows sodium could cause high blood pressure. Having high blood pressure over time can lead to heart disease, heart failure, and strokes.

So, how can you limit sodium intake to stay under the recommended 2,300 mg per day?

- Try to include raw fruits and vegetables in your diet and limit sauces and condiments that may be adding sodium. Including foods with high potassium like bananas, lima beans, and potatoes can also help your body get rid of sodium and lower blood pressure.
- Being aware of the sodium content in foods can help you make lower sodium choices. When grocery shopping, look at the Nutrition Facts Label to find foods with the lowest percent Daily Value for sodium.
- Cooking at home can help you control the amount of sodium that is added to meals. Instead of flavoring your food with salt seasonings, try adding flavor to your meals with herbs, spices, lemon, lime, and vinegar.



Send comments and/or change of address to:  
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This newsletter is edited by Adina Miller and Heather A. Eicher-Miller, PhD and is created by the Eicher-Miller Lab in the Department of Nutrition Science at Purdue University. This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Written by Mary Morgan, Purdue University Nutrition and Dietetics/Nutrition Fitness and Health 2024

The season of fall has officially begun, and squash, broccoli, Brussel sprouts, apples, pears, sweet potatoes, and pumpkins are in season! The farmer's market is a perfect place to find this fresh produce and support local farmers and businesses. It is also a fun outing for family and friends!

Some seasonal foods of fall include pumpkins, sweet potatoes and cranberries, which all have many health benefits and can be easy to add to your diet. Here are some ideas:

- Pumpkins can be added into a variety of dishes, both sweet and savory. The vegetable contains vitamin A to benefit eyesight and the skin.
- Sweet potatoes are an additional source of vitamin A, along with potassium and vitamin C. Try using them in a breakfast dish, such as a breakfast bowl or egg hash.
- Cranberries are the perfect tart berry for fall. You can include them in cooking meats, salads, or sweet treats. One benefit of cranberries is that they can protect the bladder from harmful bacteria.
- Try new recipes and check out the farmer's market for fresh produce! Farmer's markets usually end in October or Noember so check out one before it is too late!

