



Live Well, Work Well

Health and wellness tips for your work, home and life—brought to you by the insurance specialists at Sullivan Benefits

Although most nutrients are measured in grams (g), some (such as sodium and cholesterol) are measured in milligrams (mg). There are 1,000 milligrams in a gram.

FOOD LABELS: THE BREAKDOWN

As you eat your cereal in the morning, you notice it on the side of the box—that small, white rectangle with the jumble of words, numbers and percentages. It's the nutrition facts label, and it breaks down what's inside the box—everything from calories to cholesterol. Reading it can be a little confusing, but by breaking it down, you'll have a clear understanding of the value the information provides in helping you maintain a healthy diet.

Serving Size

A serving size is the recommended amount of a food that should be eaten by one person. It is important to pay attention to the serving size because the item you're eating may contain several servings. This means that if you eat an entire bag of chips that contains three servings, you're really eating three times the calories, fat, etc., that are listed on the label.

Calories and Calories from Fat

This number indicates the total number of calories and the number of calories which are derived from fat that are contained in one serving of food. You should aim for getting only about 30 percent of your daily calories from fat.

Percent Daily Values

These percentages tell you how one serving of food fits, nutritionally, into a daily diet of 2,000 calories.

Nutrient List and Amounts

Food companies must list, at a minimum, the amount of fat, cholesterol, sodium, total carbohydrates, dietary fiber, sugars, protein, vitamins A and C, calcium and iron that are contained in one serving of a product. Some labels also display trans fats. The required nutrients were chosen because they relate to current health concerns, such as coronary artery disease, diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity. Your goal should be to consume no more than 100 percent of the daily value for fat, cholesterol and sodium, and at least 100 percent of the daily values for vitamins A and C, iron and calcium.

Percent Daily Values Footnote

This shows the maximum amounts of total fat, saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium, as well as target amounts for total carbohydrates and fiber, that should be consumed each day. This is based on a suggested diet of 2,000 calories. Keep in mind that necessary calorie amounts vary for each individual.

Reading food labels is a crucial part of maintaining healthy eating habits. It allows you to make informed choices about the foods you eat and compare the nutritional value of different foods. A good diet and an active lifestyle can help your body stay healthy and disease-free.

Sample Food Label

Fat should amount to no more than 30% of your daily calories. Based on a 2,000-calorie diet, this would equate to no more than 600 calories from fat for the entire day.

This serving size is 1 cake, but 5 cakes come in the package. If you eat them all, you need to multiply all of the following nutrition facts by 5.

While it's good that this product has no trans fat, it has significant saturated fat. Less than 10% of your daily calories should come from saturated fat – this product already provides a quarter of what you should consume in 1 day.

The following percentages represent how much this product counts toward the recommended daily amount. It is based on 2,000 calories.

This product would not be a good choice if you were following a low-carb diet.

This product is quite high in sugar. While there is no FDA "recommended daily amount" since you should avoid it, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services suggests staying below 32g a day – or 8 teaspoons.

Your goal should be to consume 100% of these vitamins and nutrients per day. This product would not be a good choice for helping to meet that goal.

Nutrition Facts		
Serving Size 1 Cake (4g)		
Servings Per Container 5		
Amount Per Serving		
Calories 200 Calories from Fat 90		
% Daily Value*		
Total Fat 10g	15%	
Saturated Fat 5g	25%	
Trans Fat 0g		
Cholesterol 0mg	0%	
Sodium 100mg	4%	
Total Carbohydrate 26g	9%	
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%	
Sugars 19g		
Protein 1g		
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%	
Calcium 0%	Iron 2%	
* 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

Every food label attaches this information at the end. It is a summary of the recommended total amounts you should consume each day – based on either a 2,000-calorie or 2,500-calorie diet.