

[illegible]

Why is it important to read food labels?

Learning how to read and understand food labels can help you make healthier choices.

It can help you to avoid or limit foods or components that you want to avoid, or are allergic to.

According to South African legislation, food labels must carry the name of the product; the name and address of the manufacturer or distributor; a list of all ingredients, where applicable; instructions for use; storage conditions, if any, and a sell-by or best-before date if this applies.

If there are any common food allergens in the food, such as peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, fish, soya, gluten, any significant cereals (such as wheat) and dairy products, these must be declared.

The list of ingredients is printed in descending order according to mass. This means that the main ingredient needs to appear first, and so on right down to the smallest one. If a food such as a pasta sauce has fat (oil, hydrogenated vegetable fat, creamer, fat powder) near the top of the list (i.e. listed amongst the first 3 items), it could contain a lot of fat.

In addition to the Nutritional Information Table, a lot of foods today also come with nutrient content claims provided by the manufacturer. These claims are typically featured in ads for the foods or in the promotional copy on the food packages themselves. Nutritional claims such as ‘high in fibre’, ‘low sodium’ and ‘low fat’ must be accompanied by a nutritional table to substantiate the claim, and logos of endorsement bodies must have been approved by the Director-General of the Department of Health.

Here are some tips for making the most of the information on the food label:

Start here

Note the size of a single serving and how many servings are in the package. Look at the serving size and how many servings you’re really consuming. If you double the servings you eat, you double the energy.

Checkers housebrand Fish Fingers

The suggested portion is 125g (5 units)

600 g net

This pack contains 600g (24 x 25g individual units)

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION*		
	per 100 g	per 125 g single serving
Energy (kJ)	788	985
Protein (g)	12.6	15.8
Glycaemic carbohydrate (g)	15	19
of which total sugar (g)	1.6	2.0
Total fat (g)	8.2	10.3
of which saturated fat (g)	3.0	3.8
of which monounsaturated fat (g)	3.0	3.8
of which polyunsaturated fat (g)	2.3	2.9
of which Omega 3 Fatty Acids (mg)	200	250
of which ALA (mg)	200	250
of which Omega 6 Fatty Acids (mg)	2.1	2.6
Cholesterol (mg)	25	31
Dietary fibre# (g)	2.4	3.0
Total sodium (mg)	348	435

Total Energy

Foods that contain a high quantity of fat or sugar should be kept to a minimum.

- Remember that foods that contain a little sugar to improve the taste can be enjoyed, especially if they are low in fat, have a low GI and are high in fibre (e.g. baked beans, breakfast cereal, low fat yogurt). The Glycaemic Index (GI) is a measure of how fast, and to what extent, a carbohydrate food affects blood glucose levels. By choosing low GI carbohydrates in combination with low-fat foods, heart health and blood pressure may be improved. For those wanting to lose weight, low GI carbohydrate foods digest slower, may be more filling and reduce insulin levels (a fat storer) which may enhance weight loss.

- Some foods will say “no added sugar” but will still be high in natural sugar (e.g. fruit sugar). These options are not ideal. All sugar should be taken into consideration when planning the overall meal plan.
- Added sugar is defined as sugar, honey, molasses, coloured sugar, fruit juice concentrate, decaffeinated and/or de-ionised fruit juice and concentrates thereof, high fructose corn syrup or any other syrup. The claim ‘no added sugar’ can only be used if none of the above are added to the product.
- Foods that are labelled “lite” or “diet” or “low energy” are usually (but not always) suitable. For example, diet cold drinks are acceptable but certain “diet” foods (e.g. diet chocolate) are relatively high in kilojoules compared to many other available options and therefore not a good choice if one wants to restrict kilojoule consumption.

Checkers housebrand Coconut biscuits

200 g net

This product is energy dense. One biscuit (9g) contains 1.7g fat and 179 kJ

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (as packed)		
	per 100 g	per 9 g single serving (1 biscuit)
Energy (kJ)	1987	179
Protein (g)	7.8	0.7
Carbohydrate (g)	68	6
of which total sugar (g)	20.7	1.9
Total Fat (g)	19.0	1.7
of which Saturated Fat (g)	10.7	1.0
Dietary Fibre# (g)	3.0	0.3
Total Sodium (mg)	391	35

#AQAC 985:23
Data sourced from SANAS Accredited Laboratory

Fats: Important facts about fat that we can get from food labels:

Fat intake should be limited, especially saturated- and trans fats found in animal fats, full cream dairy products, chocolate, coconut, hard margarine, full cream products, baked goods (e.g. pies and cookies) and palm oils (e.g. coffee creamers and artificial cream).

Determine how much fat is in the food; for example, compare the amount of fat in 100g of different brands of food. In general, aim to purchase only food with ≤ 3g fat per 100 g of the food item. Remember that some foods that may not taste fatty can be high in hidden fat – thus always check food labels.

Two examples of breakfast cereal:

BREAKFAST CEREAL
Rolled Oats, Wheat Flakes and Barley Flakes with Sugar

This is high in fat: 14.1g/100g and 7.1g (1½ tsp) of fat per serving (50g)

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (as packed)		
Average values	Per 100 g	Per 50 g serving
Energy (kJ)	1640	820
Protein (g)	8.5	4.3
Glycaemic carbohydrate (g)	61.1	31
of which total sugar (g)	9.8	5.0
Total fat (g)	14.1	7.1
of which saturated fat (g)	5.4	2.7
of which monounsaturated fat (g)	3.4	1.7
of which polyunsaturated fat (g)	10.2	5.1
Dietary fibre (g)#	6	3
Total sodium (mg)		

Checkers housebrand wholewheat Bran Flakes

500 g net

This is low fat: 1.6g/100g and 0.6g per serving (40g)

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (as packed)		
	per 100 g	per 40 g serving
Energy (kJ)	1441	576
Protein (g)	8.8	3.5
Glycaemic carbohydrate (g)	72.4	29.0
of which total sugar (g)	15.7	6.3
Total fat (g)	1.6	0.6
of which saturated fat (g)	0.5	0.1
of which monounsaturated fat (g)	0.2	0.1
of which polyunsaturated fat (g)	1.0	0.4
Dietary fibre# (g)	10.1	4.0
Total sodium (mg)	380	152

*International laboratory services
Method of analysis: std test method 30.44/ices

Sodium

Salt is composed of sodium and chloride. Sodium has been the cause of some concern as excess sodium in the diet can lead to high blood pressure and other related diseases. Read the nutritional information table on the label and find out how many milligrams of sodium (Na) the food item contains. Multiply this number by 2,5 to calculate the amount of salt in milligrams (divide by 1000 to get the salt value in grams).

RED BICYCLE CHOCOLATE HAZELNUT Duo Spread 750 g

This is a low salt spread. It contains less than 120mg sodium per 100g

TYPICAL NUTRITIONAL INFORMATION (AS PACKED)		PER 100 g	PER 20 g SERVING
ENERGY (kJ)		2369	474
PROTEIN (g)		1.4	0.3
GLYCAEMIC CARBOHYDRATE (g)		61.1	12.2
OF WHICH TOTAL SUGAR (g)		57.8	11.5
TOTAL FAT (g)		35.0	7.0
OF WHICH SATURATED FAT (g)		8.1	1.6
OF WHICH TRANS FAT (g)		0.3	<0.1
OF WHICH MONOUNSATURATED FAT (g)		19.1	3.8
OF WHICH POLYUNSATURATED FAT (g)		7.5	1.5
DIETARY FIBRE (g)		0.9	0.2
TOTAL SODIUM (mg)		93	17

Use this as a rule when choosing foods containing salt: those that contain more than 1,5g per 100g are high in salt. Try to avoid these. Foods that have less than 0,3g of salt per 100g are low in salt and a better choice for you. Look for the Heart Mark to identify foods that are lower in salt content. Some products appear to have less salt than they do: ‘low sodium’ 120 mg sodium for each 100 g, whereas ‘virtually free from sodium’ actually means there can be up to 5mg sodium for each 100g.



For more information on healthy living kindly contact
Nutrition Information Centre Stellenbosch University (Nicus)
on 021 933 1408 or send an email to nicus@sun.ac.za

Should you have any comments on our range of consumer leaflets, please write to Sarita van Wyk at: Shoprite Checkers Communications Department, PO Box 215, Brackenfell 7561 www.checkers.co.za

If a food claims to be... It means that one serving of the product contains... “nutrient content claim” means a claim that describes the level of a nutrient or energy contained in a foodstuff

SUGAR

Reduced Sugar: At least 25% less sugar for each serving than the original product

No added sugar: Sugar in any form has not been added as an ingredient

FAT

Fat free: Less than 0.5 grams of fat per 100g/ml

Low fat: 3 grams of fat or less per 100g solid 1.5g or less per 100 ml liquids

Reduced fat or less fat: At least 25 percent less fat than the regular product

Low in saturated fat: 1.5 gram of saturated fat or less per 100g, with not more than 10 percent of the total energy coming from saturated fat

Lean: Less than 10 grams of fat per 100g

Extra lean: Less than 5 grams of fat per 100g

Light (lite): At least 25% kilojoules

CHOLESTEROL

Cholesterol free: Less than 5 milligrams of cholesterol per 100g/ml

Low cholesterol: 20 mg or less per 100 g (solids) 10 mg or less per 100 ml (liquids)

SODIUM

‘Virtually free from Sodium’: Less than 5 milligrams of sodium per 100g

Very low sodium: Less than 40 mg of sodium per 100 g

Low sodium: Less than 120 mg of sodium per 100 g

Reduced or less sodium: At least 25 % less sodium than the regular product

FIBRE

High fibre: At least 6 g of fibre per 100 g

Source of fibre: At least 3 g of fibre per 100 g

Vitamins and minerals

Vitamins and minerals which are present either naturally or added by means of enrichment or food fortification

Source of: 15-30% of NRV (Nutrient Reference Values)

High in: More than 30% of the NRV per nutrient per portion

Checkers housebrand Verstaan Voedsel-etiket & Gezondheids Eise

wholewheat Bran Flakes

Buttermilk Biscuits

Coconut biscuits

Checkers housebrand

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