

# Reading Food Labels is Easy

Check out food labels. How can you tell which foods are heart healthy? Do you wonder how you can fit your favorite foods into your diet? It's EASY! By reading labels and looking at total grams of fat and saturated fat, you can enjoy your favorites.

## 1. Determine how much fat you can have each day.

Ask your health care professional what percentage of total fat intake is right for you. Then, refer to the Healthy Hearts Guide *COUNT YOUR FAT GRAMS WORKSHEET*.

My total daily allowance of fat is \_\_\_\_\_ grams.

## 2. Look at how much of your total fat can be saturated fats.

Health experts agree that it is important to limit saturated fats to less than 1/3 of your total daily fat gram allowance. Divide your total fat allowance by three. This is how much of your total fat should come from saturated fats.

My daily allowance of saturated fat is \_\_\_\_\_ grams.

## 3. Examine the label. Avoid all trans-fat and hydrogenated oil.

- Find the serving size.
- Now find the number of grams of fat, listed as "Total Fat". This is the grams of fat for one serving size.
- Under Total Fat, find the grams of Saturated Fat. The grams of saturated fat are part of the total fat. Don't take in *any* trans-fat.

(Note: You may not find trans-fat listed on food labels, so read the small print in the ingredients section and if the product contains partially hydrogenated oils, BOYCOTT the product!)

## NOW DECIDE!

*Does this product fit into your daily fat allowance? Do you want to adjust your food intake the rest of the day? Limiting certain foods and finding substitutes is the key to a heart healthy eating plan.*

*Consume* a diet rich in fruits and vegetables; choose whole-grain, high-fiber foods; consume fish, especially oily fish,\* at least twice a week.

*Limit* intake of saturated fat to < 10% of energy, and if possible < 7%, cholesterol to < 300 mg/d, and sodium intake to < 2.3 g/d (approx 1 tsp salt). Consumption of trans-fatty acids should be as low as possible, but reading food labels for trans-fat content is not enough. You must read the fine print in the ingredients section and avoid products with "partially hydrogenated oil", found in stick margarine, commercial baked goods and snack foods.

*Limit* alcohol intake to no more than 1 drink per day

*Limit* mayonnaise, cooking oils, salad dressings, high fat milk products (including butter and cheese) and red meats. Remove the skin from poultry.

*Try* margarine that is more liquid (in pump-spray or tub). Try using cooking sprays, no-fat or light sandwich spreads, no fat or low-fat salad dressings, light butter, skim milk, skinless poultry or skinless fish and natural peanut butter.

*Replace* unhealthy fats with heart-healthy fats. Eat monounsaturated oils like olive, canola and peanut as they protect HDL - the "Good" cholesterol. Taking in 2-3 tablespoons of olive oil each day can help raise HDL level- the "healthy" cholesterol.

(Other ways to raise HDL are through regular aerobics, maintaining a healthy weight and quitting smoking.)

*Increase* dietary fiber. Foods with soluble fiber can help to lower blood cholesterol levels. Aim for 25 – 30 grams of fiber a day, 1/4 of which should consist of soluble fiber and 3/4 from insoluble fiber. Soluble fiber is found primarily in oats, beans, fruits and vegetables. Read the food label for the content of both soluble and insoluble fiber.



### Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup

Servings Per Container 9

Amount Per Serving

Calories 110      Calories from Fat 15

	% Daily Value*
<b>Total Fat</b> 2g	<b>3%</b>
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Polyunsaturated Fat 0.5g	
Monounsaturated Fat 0.5g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 0 mg	<b>0%</b>
<b>Potassium</b> 95mg	<b>3%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 280 mg	<b>12%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 22g	<b>7%</b>
Dietary Fiber 3g	<b>11%</b>
Soluble Fiber 1g	
Insoluble Fiber 2g	
<b>Sugars</b> 1g	
<b>Protein</b> 3g	

Vitamin A 10%      Vitamin C 10%  
Calcium 4%      Iron 45%

\* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your 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

Calories per gram:

Fat 9      Carbohydrate 4      Protein 4

\* Pregnant and lactating women should avoid eating fish potentially high in methylmercury (eg shark, swordfish, king mackerel or tile fish) and should eat up to 12 oz/wk of a variety of fish and shellfish low in mercury. Check the Environmental Protection Agency and the US Food and Drug Administration's Web sites for updates and local advisories about safety of local catch.

**HEALTHY HEARTS PROGRAM**  
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