NUTRITION 101

Eating is an essential part of life! All foods have calories which come from macronutrients (proteins, fats, and carbohydrates). Food also provides essential vitamins and minerals that our body needs to function correctly.



LET'S BREAK IT DOWN

What Are Calories?

A calorie is a unit of energy that is in all foods! You need energy from calories for your body to work.

What Is Protein?

Protein is the essential building block of life. Lean sources of protein include low-fat cheeses, low-fat yogurt, eggs, poultry, fish, and beans/legumes.

What Are Fats?

The body uses fat as a fuel source. Fat has many other functions in the body, and a moderate amount is needed in the diet for good health.

What Are Carbs?

Carbs are found in many foods like grains, dairy, and produce. Carbohydrates come in a variety of forms such as sugars, fiber, and starches.

MyPlate can help guide your nutrition choices!

FRUITS

Focus on whole fruits (fresh, frozen, or canned). If you buy canned fruits, make sure it's in 100% juice or water. Aim for 2 cups/day.

VEGGIES

Try to eat a variety of vegetables (fresh, frozen, or canned). Look for low-sodium or no-salt-added. Aim for 2.5 cups per day.

GRAINS

Try to choose whole grains (breads, pasta, tortillas). Aim for 6 ounces per day.

PROTEIN

Try to eat a variety of protein foods such as beans, poultry, seafood, nuts, and seeds. Aim for 5.5 ounces per day.

DAIRY

Try to choose low-fat (1%) or fat-free (skim) dairy. Aim for 3 cups per day.

Lifepoint Health

SECOND HARVEST FOOD BANK of MIDDLE TENNESSEE

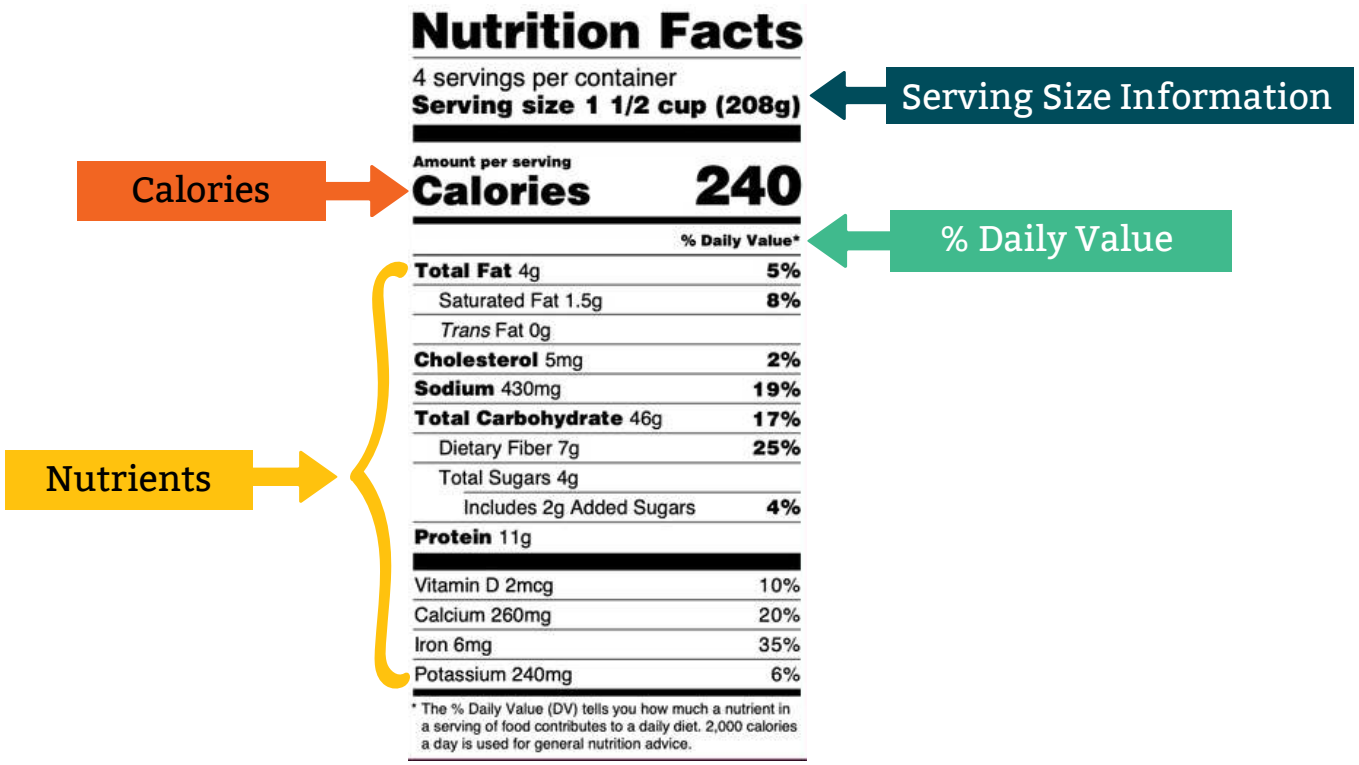
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NUTRITION 101

The Nutrition Facts label is overseen by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The information on a food label is to help people make informed decisions about the food they choose to consume.



Reading the Nutrition Facts Label



Calories

Calories tell you how much energy you get from a serving of food. In the example above, there are 240 calories per serving (1.5 cup). Since there are 4 servings per container, the entire container would have 960 calories (240 calories x 4 servings).

Serving Size

When looking at the nutrition facts label, look at the number of servings per container and the serving size. This can help you make an informed decision of how much of the food to eat.

% Daily Value

The % daily value shows how much of a nutrient is in one serving. To best apply the % daily value, remember: 5% or less of a nutrient per serving is considered low and 20% is considered high.

Nutrients

This part of the label shows you key nutrients that impact your health. Remember, it's important to cut back on saturated fat, sodium, and added sugar in your diet.

References: FDA (2020). How to Understand and Use the Nutrition Facts Label. FDA. [online] Available at: https://www.fda.gov/food/new-nutrition-facts-label/how-understand-and-use-nutrition-facts-label. | Boston, 677 H.A. and Ma 02115 +1495-1000 (2021). Understanding Food Labels. [online] The Nutrition Source. Available at: https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/nutritionsource/food-label-guide/.