

FDA U.S. FOOD & DRUG
ADMINISTRATION

www.fda.gov/nutritioneducation

Learning to use the **Nutrition Facts** label will help young people establish healthy eating habits that can last a lifetime. Engage the youth in your afterschool, summer, or outdoor program today.

Revised: October 2018

Dear Youth Program Leader:

Welcome to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) **Read the Label**—a portfolio of materials created to reach youth with important nutrition information. The Read the Label materials introduce young people to the **Nutrition Facts** label and show them how easy it can be to use this simple tool to make smart food choices.

Youth leaders and community educators across the Nation have a unique opportunity when working with young people (ages 9 to 13) to help them understand what's on the Nutrition Facts label and integrate this information into their daily lives. You are in the ideal position to help kids adopt nutrition habits that can help them feel great, be active, and support their growing bodies.

Join FDA in helping kids make healthier food choices!

Helping kids understand and use the information on the label to make healthy food choices will get them excited about taking control of their own nutritional decisions. You'll be equipping them to "get their food facts first" and build healthier habits for a lifetime.

Get started today!

Everyday Ways You Can Help!

You can help spread the Read the Label message to the young people in your program—and beyond. Here's how:

- 1. Introduce the topic** by sharing the key messages about the label (see Tips for Kids). Post them on the wall or print out/copy the pages to serve as a take-home piece.
- 2. Educate** afterschool program attendees, campers, scouts, and other youth about the Nutrition Facts label. (See Activity 1)
- 3. Encourage** kids to use their label knowledge at home ... at school ... at the supermarket ... and at restaurants! Invite them to use the [Read the Label Cool Tips for Kids](#).
- 4. Provide information** for parents/caregivers whenever feasible. Remind them to check out the [Read the Label parent materials](#)
- 5. Be a role model.** Demonstrate label reading during "teachable moments" like afterschool snack time or camping trips. (See Activity 2)
- 6. Encourage kids to be** "ambassadors" who can spread the word to their family, friends, and community. (See Mini Activities)
- 7. Learn more** about the [Nutrition Facts label](#).
- 8. Sign up** for the [News for Educators](#) email.

Nutrition Facts
Read the Label

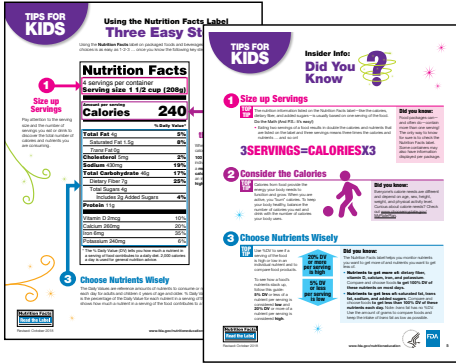
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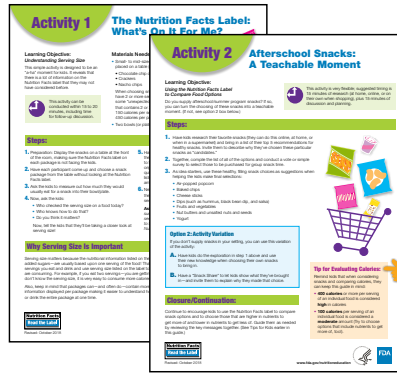


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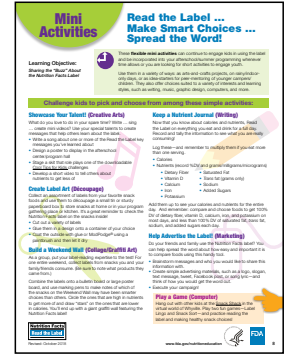
What's Inside:



Tips for Kids: Three Easy Steps!
Explains the program's key messages on servings, calories, and nutrients



Activities for Youth Groups
Two engaging projects that reinforce the nutrition messaging



Mini Activities to Inspire Kids
Fun challenges suited to a variety of interests

Additional Resources for You

The entire portfolio of Read the Label youth outreach materials can be downloaded and shared with young people and their families. All family materials are available in both English and Spanish.

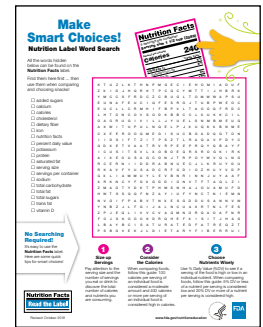
Here's what you'll find:



Cool Tips for Kids



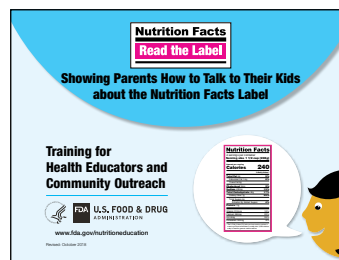
Tips for Parents



Nutrition Facts Label Word Search



Read the Label Infographic



PowerPoint® Presentation and Talking Points (background on the program)

Sources for Nutrition Information

Read the Label materials were created to help you engage kids with easy steps to read and understand the Nutrition Facts label. The materials are not intended to offer specific nutritional advice or recommendations.

For more information about nutrition and health, refer to:

- www.choosemyplate.gov
- www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines
- www.cdc.gov/hcccdphp/dnpao/index.html



TIPS FOR KIDS

Using the Nutrition Facts Label Three Easy Steps

Using the **Nutrition Facts** label on packaged foods and beverages to make healthy dietary choices is as easy as 1-2-3 ... once you know the following key steps and insider tips!

1

Size up Servings

Pay attention to the serving size and the number of servings you eat or drink to discover the total number of calories and nutrients you are consuming.

Nutrition Facts

4 servings per container
Serving size 1 1/2 cup (208g)

Amount per serving

Calories 240

% Daily Value*

Total Fat 4g	5%
Saturated Fat 1.5g	8%
<i>Trans</i> Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 5mg	2%
Sodium 430mg	19%
Total Carbohydrate 46g	17%
Dietary Fiber 7g	25%
Total Sugars 4g	
Includes 2g Added Sugars	4%
Protein 11g	
Vitamin D 2mcg	10%
Calcium 260mg	20%
Iron 6mg	35%
Potassium 240mg	6%

* The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

2

Consider the Calories

When checking a food's calories, remember this guide:
100 calories per serving of an individual food is considered a **moderate** amount and **400 calories** or more per serving of an individual food is considered **high** in calories.

3

Choose Nutrients Wisely

The Daily Values are reference amounts of nutrients to consume or not to exceed each day for adults and children 4 years of age and older. % Daily Value (%DV) is the percentage of the Daily Value for each nutrient in a serving of the food and shows how much a nutrient in a serving of the food contributes to a total daily diet.

Nutrition Facts
Read the Label

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Insider Info: Did You Know



1 Size up Servings

TOP TIP

The nutrition information listed on the Nutrition Facts label—like the calories, dietary fiber, and added sugars—is usually based on one serving of the food. **Do the Math (And P.S.: It's easy!)**

- Eating two servings of a food results in double the calories and nutrients that are listed on the label and three servings means three times the calories and nutrients ... and so on!

Did you know:

Food packages can—and often do—contain more than one serving! The only way to know for sure is to check the Nutrition Facts label. Some containers may also have information displayed per package.

3SERVINGS=CALORIESX3

2 Consider the Calories

TOP TIP

Calories from food provide the energy your body needs to function and grow. When you are active, you “burn” calories. To keep your body healthy, balance the number of calories you eat and drink with the number of calories your body uses.



Did you know:

Everyone's calorie needs are different and depend on age, sex, height, weight, and physical activity level. Curious about calorie needs? Check out www.choosemyplate.gov/MyPlatePlan.

3 Choose Nutrients Wisely

TOP TIP

Use %DV to see if a serving of the food is high or low in an individual nutrient and to compare food products.

To see how a food's nutrients stack up, follow this guide:
5% DV or less of a nutrient per serving is considered **low** and **20% DV** or more of a nutrient per serving is considered **high**.

20% DV or more per serving is high

5% DV or less per serving is low

Did you know:

The Nutrition Facts label helps you monitor nutrients you want to get more of and nutrients you want to get less of.

- **Nutrients to get more of: dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium.** Compare and choose foods **to get 100% DV of these nutrients on most days.**
- **Nutrients to get less of: saturated fat, trans fat, sodium, and added sugars.** Compare and choose foods **to get less than 100% DV of these nutrients each day.** Note: *trans* fat has no %DV. Use the amount of grams to compare foods and keep the intake of *trans* fat as low as possible.

Nutrition Facts
Read the Label

Activity 1

The Nutrition Facts Label: What's On It For Me?

Learning Objective:

Understanding Serving Size

This simple activity is designed to be an “a-ha” moment for kids. It reveals that there is a lot of information on the Nutrition Facts label that they may not have considered before.



This activity can be conducted within 15 to 20 minutes, including time for follow-up discussion.

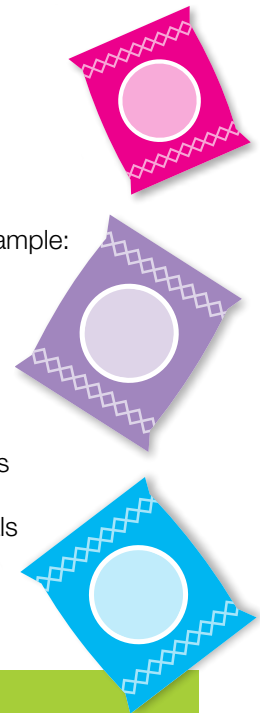
Materials Needed:

- Small- to mid-sized bags or boxes of popular snack foods, placed on a table (at least one item per participant). For example:

- Chocolate chip cookies
- Crackers
- Nacho chips
- Popcorn
- Potato chips
- Pretzels

When choosing snacks, be sure that the snack packages have 2 or more servings per container. Also, try to find some “unexpected” examples, such as a small bag of chips that contains 2 or 3 servings per container. For example: 150 calories per serving with 3 servings per container equals 450 calories per package.

- Two bowls (or plates) for each participant



Steps:

1. Preparation: Display the snacks on a table at the front of the room, making sure the Nutrition Facts label on each package is not facing the kids.
2. Have each participant come up and choose a snack package from the table without looking at the Nutrition Facts label.
3. Ask the kids to measure out how much they would usually eat for a snack into their bowl/plate.
4. Now, ask the kids:
 - Who checked the serving size on a food today?
 - Who knows how to do that?
 - Do you think it matters?
5. Have them check serving size on the Nutrition Facts label of their chosen snack, and measure out a serving according to the label into another bowl. They'll likely see that the original portions of the snack items they measured out are quite different from the portions based on the serving size listed on the label! Together with the kids, discuss how the amounts differ.
6. Next, have the kids figure out the calories for the serving size they typically eat. Remind them that if they are eating two servings, they are getting double the calories and nutrients!

Ask the kids: *Did what you discovered about serving size surprise you? Tell them that most people are surprised to see how much a serving of their favorite snack is according to the label. The key is to check the serving size on the Nutrition Facts label before eating the snack.*

Now, tell the kids that they'll be taking a closer look at serving size!

Why Serving Size Is Important

Serving size matters because the nutritional information listed on the Nutrition Facts label—such as calories, dietary fiber, and added sugars—are usually based upon one serving of the food! That's why it is important to pay attention to the number of servings you eat and drink and use serving size listed on the label to discover the total number of calories and nutrients you are consuming. For example, if you eat two servings—you are getting double the calories and double the nutrients. When you don't know the serving size, it is very easy to consume more calories and nutrients than intended.

Also, keep in mind that packages can—and often do—contain more than one serving. Some containers may also have information displayed per package making it easier to understand how many calories and nutrients you are getting if you eat or drink the entire package at one time.



Activity 2

Afterschool Snacks: A Teachable Moment

Learning Objective:

Using the Nutrition Facts Label to Compare Food Options

Do you supply afterschool/summer program snacks? If so, you can turn the choosing of these snacks into a teachable moment. (If not, see option 2 box below.)



This activity is very flexible; suggested timing is 15 minutes of research (at home, online, or on their own when shopping), plus 15 minutes of discussion and planning.

Steps:

1. Have kids research their favorite snacks (they can do this online, at home, or when in a supermarket) and bring in a list of their top 5 recommendations for healthy snacks. Invite them to describe why they've chosen these particular snacks as "candidates."
2. Together, compile the list of all of the options and conduct a vote or simple survey to select those to be purchased for group snack time.
3. As idea starters, use these healthy, filling snack choices as suggestions when helping the kids make final selections:
 - Air-popped popcorn
 - Baked chips
 - Cheese sticks
 - Dips (such as hummus, black bean dip, and salsa)
 - Fruits and vegetables
 - Nut butters and unsalted nuts and seeds
 - Yogurt



Option 2: Activity Variation

If you don't supply snacks in your setting, you can use this variation of the activity:

- A. Have kids do the exploration in step 1 above and use their new knowledge when choosing their own snacks to bring in.
- B. Have a "Snack Share" to let kids show what they've brought in—and invite them to explain why they made that choice.

Closure/Continuation:

Continue to encourage kids to use the Nutrition Facts label to compare snack options and to choose those that are higher in nutrients to get more of and lower in nutrients to get less of. Guide them as needed by reviewing the key messages together. (See Tips for Kids earlier in this guide.)

Tip for Evaluating Calories:

Remind kids that when considering snacks and comparing calories, they can keep this guide in mind:

- **400 calories** or more per serving of an individual food is considered **high** in calories
- **100 calories** per serving of an individual food is considered a **moderate** amount (Try to choose options that include nutrients to get more of, too!).



Mini Activities

Read the Label ... Make Smart Choices ... Spread the Word!

Learning Objective:

Sharing the “Buzz” About the Nutrition Facts Label



These **flexible mini activities** can continue to engage kids in using the label and be incorporated into your afterschool/summer programming whenever time allows or you are looking for short activities to engage youth.

Use them in a variety of ways: as arts-and-crafts projects, on rainy/indoor-only days, or as idea-starters for peer-mentoring of younger campers/children. They also offer choices suited to a variety of interests and learning styles, such as writing, music, graphic design, computers, and more.

Challenge kids to pick and choose from among these simple activities:

Showcase Your Talent! (Creative Arts)

What do you love to do in your spare time? Write ... sing ... create mini videos? Use your special talents to create messages that help others learn about the label.

- Write a song about one or more of the Read the Label key messages you've learned about
- Design a poster to display in the afterschool center/program hall
- Stage a skit that role plays one of the downloadable [Cool Tips for Kids](#) challenges
- Develop a short video to tell others about nutrients to get less of

Create Label Art (Découpage)

Collect an assortment of labels from your favorite snack foods and use them to découpage a small tin or sturdy paperboard box to store snacks at home or in your program gathering place or kitchen. It's a great reminder to check the Nutrition Facts label on the snacks inside!

- Cut out a variety of labels
- Glue them in a design onto a container of your choice
- Coat the outside with glue or ModPodge® using a paintbrush and then let it dry

Build a Weekend Wall (Collage/Graffiti Art)

As a group, put your label-reading expertise to the test! For one entire weekend, collect labels from snacks you and your family/friends consume. (Be sure to note what products they came from.)

Combine the labels onto a bulletin board or large poster board, and use marking pens to make notes of which of the snacks on the Weekend Wall may have been smarter choices than others. Circle the ones that are high in nutrients to get more of and draw “stars” on the ones that are lower in calories. You'll end up with a giant graffiti wall featuring the Nutrition Facts label!

Keep a Nutrient Journal (Writing)

Now that you know about calories and nutrients, Read the Label on everything you eat and drink for a full day. Record and tally the information to see what you are really consuming!

Log these—and remember to multiply them if you eat more than one serving.

- Calories
- Nutrients (record %DV and grams/milligrams/micrograms)
 - Dietary Fiber
 - Saturated Fat
 - Vitamin D
 - *Trans* fat (grams only)
 - Calcium
 - Sodium
 - Iron
 - Added Sugars
 - Potassium

Add them up to see your calories and nutrients for the entire day. And remember: compare and choose foods to get 100% DV of dietary fiber, vitamin D, calcium, iron, and potassium on most days, and less than 100% DV of saturated fat, *trans* fat, sodium, and added sugars each day.

Help Advertise the Label! (Marketing)

Do your friends and family use the Nutrition Facts label? You can help spread the word about how easy and important it is to compare foods using this handy tool.

- Brainstorm messages and who you would like to share this information with.
- Create simple advertising materials, such as a logo, slogan, text message, tweet, Facebook post, or song lyric—and think of how you would get the word out.
- Execute your campaign!

Play a Game (Computer)

Hang out with other kids at the [Snack Shack](#) in the virtual world of Whyville. Play two fun games—Label Lingo and Snack Sort—and practice reading the label and making healthy snack choices!



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