

# cracking the **FOOD** **LABEL CODE**



## Nutrition Facts

1 serving per container

Serving size

1/4 cup (40g)

Amount per serving

**Calories**

**120**

% Daily Value\*

Total Fat 0g

Saturated Fat 0g

Trans Fat 0g

0mg



**RESULTS**  
Personal Training & Group Fitness

# WELCOME TO CRACKING THE FOOD LABEL CODE!



## READY TO BECOME A FOOD LABEL SLEUTH?

You're in the right place!

There's SO MUCH information on our food labels these days. It's almost like the label has its own language!

It can be a real challenge to understand everything you're looking at.

What does that info really mean to you, your diet, and your health?

This ebook will break it all down in a logical, step-by-step guide.

First, we'll show you how to dissect the food label, and then

we'll outline a 10-second strategy that will streamline your food shopping trips.

You'll learn how to:

- 1. Make more informed decisions at the grocery store, and**
- 2. Take back control over the quality of foods you choose.**

Doing the research to upgrade your food choices doesn't have to be a chore.

Let's get started!

# THE HISTORY OF FOOD LABELS

The food label has changed a lot since its inception in the mid-1960s.

At first, manufacturers were only required to list the ingredients on the label.

Over time, that has evolved to the modern food label, which now includes a comprehensive breakdown of macronutrients (protein, carbohydrates, and fat), vitamins, minerals, and more.

In fact, nutrition labels are constantly evolving in countries across the world.



The changes reflect not only new discoveries in the link between nutrition and health, but also public health efforts to help people make healthier and more informed decisions.

Over the next few pages we'll outline how to put that info into action for you and your family!

# THE FOOD LABEL

## YOUR STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR ANALYZING NUTRITION LABELS

### YOUR PLAN OF ATTACK

Having a system makes all the difference!

We've created a "quick label scan" strategy to make it easy.

Over the next few pages, we'll outline how and why this scanning strategy works, and why each component matters.

Using this method can save you time, since it can quickly eliminate foods that can get in the way of you reaching your goals.

Typical values	per 100 g	per 20g serving
Energy	1280kJ 303kcal	256kJ 61kcal
Fat	3.1g	0.6g
of which saturates	1.6g	0.3g
Carbohydrate*	50g	10.0g
of which sugars	49g	9.8g
Fibre	3.2g	0.6g
*Protein	21g	4.3g
Salt	0.53g	0.11g

**1** → INGREDIENTS:

### YOUR QUICK SCAN CHECKLIST

**1. INGREDIENTS**

**2. SERVING SIZE**

**3. CALORIES & MACROS**

**4. THINGS TO EAT LESS OF**

**5. NUTRIENTS WITH ADDED BENEFITS**

**\* PROTEIN & CARBOHYDRATES**



## INGREDIENTS

*Ingredients are listed by the order of weight. The ingredient used the MOST is listed first, and the ingredient used the LEAST is listed last!*

### **HOW MANY INGREDIENTS DOES IT CONTAIN?**

**WHY IT MATTERS:** Foods with a lot of ingredients are often highly processed (aka “ultra processed”). Processed foods often are less nutritious and are designed to be “highly palatable” ... which means you’re likely to eat more of them.

This can translate into eating more calories with less nutrition.

### **DO YOU KNOW WHAT EACH INGREDIENT IS?**

**WHY IT MATTERS:** Many times, unhealthy fats (like hydrogenated oils, aka trans fats) and added sugar can sneak into your food under different names, even though the nutrition panel shows 0 grams of them.

# TOP 10 INGREDIENT OFFENDERS

Listing all the hows & whys of ALL the ingredients you need to watch out for would require a textbook! But we've put together this **Top 10 Ingredient Offender list** to help you weed out foods that don't promote health.

Major rule of thumb: If you can't pronounce the ingredient, it's probably not something you want to put into your body!

- 1 ARTIFICIAL DYES & BRIGHTENERS**  
Blue 1, Caramel color, Red 3 (Erythrosine), Red 40, Titanium Dioxide, Yellow 5 (Tartrazine), Yellow 6.
- 2 ARTIFICIAL FLAVORS & ENHANCERS**  
Autolyzed yeast extract, Hydrolyzed protein, Monosodium glutamate (MSG), "Natural flavors."
- 3 ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS**  
Acesulfame potassium, Aspartame, Neotame, Sucralose/Splenda.
- 4 SUGARS**  
Just a few to look out for: Corn syrup, Dextrose, Fructose, Fructose syrup, High fructose corn syrup (HFCS).



- 5 BLEACHED FLOURS**  
Or other processed flours.
- 6 REFINED & PROCESSED OILS**  
Canola, Corn, Cottonseed, Partially Hydrogenated Oils, Soybean.
- 7 PRESERVATIVES**  
BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole), BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene), Calcium propionate, Propylparaben, Methylparaben, Propyl gallate, Sodium benzoate, Potassium benzoate, Sodium nitrate, Sodium nitrite, Sodium phosphate, TBHQ (tert-butylhydroquinone).
- 8 THICKENERS & EMULSIFIERS**  
Carrageenan, Lecithin, Gellan gum, Cellulose gum, Guar gum, Monoglycerides, Diglycerides.
- 9 DOUGH CONDITIONERS**  
Azodicarbonamide, Calcium peroxide, DATEM (Diacetyl tartaric acid esters of monoglycerides).
- 10 PROCESSED FOOD SUPPLEMENTS**  
Soy protein isolate is a common highly-processed genetically modified protein supplement in many "healthy" or diet foods.



## SERVING SIZE

**WILL YOU EAT MORE, LESS, OR THE SAME AMOUNT AS THE RECOMMENDED SERVING SIZE?**

It's also helpful to look at the number of servings in the package.

**WHY IT MATTERS:** The suggested serving size is the amount of food represented in the nutritional breakdown.

This is important because we often eat more than the suggested serving size without ever realizing it – especially when it comes to ultra processed foods.

As a result, you could be unknowingly taking in a LOT more calories than you anticipated.





## CALORIES & MACROS

**HOW MANY CALORIES ARE IN A SINGLE SERVING - OR IN THE AMOUNT YOU PLAN TO EAT?**

**WHY IT MATTERS:** While calories aren't "bad" or "good," it's a good idea to know the number.

That way, you'll have an idea what proportion of your overall daily fuel intake the food represents, especially when it's a processed food (which often contain more calories and fewer healthy micronutrients).

**MIND YOUR MACROS:** Note the proportion of fats/carbs/protein you're taking in, so that you are eating in alignment with your goals.

Check out the  section below for more details.



# 4

## TRANS FATS, ADDED SUGAR, SODIUM, & MORE

\*\*\*AIM FOR LESS OF THESE\*\*\*

This can help reduce your risk of chronic diseases.

### WHY IT MATTERS:

1. It's no secret, trans fats are linked to having a higher risk for developing heart disease.
2. Eating too much added sugar is linked with insulin sensitivity, diabetes and obesity. Plus, filling up on sugary foods makes it harder to meet your overall nutrient needs while staying within your daily calorie requirement.
3. For many people, high levels of sodium can add up to high blood pressure.
4. Also, keep a close eye on the "**Top 10 Ingredient Offenders**" for all of the reasons outlined earlier!





## **FIBER, VITAMINS & MINERALS**

**\*\*\*AIM FOR MORE OF THESE\*\*\***

Check out "daily value" percentages of fiber, potassium, vitamin D, calcium, and iron percentages – as well as the daily value of other vitamins.

### **WHY IT MATTERS:**

Fiber helps with digestion and satiety, and the vitamins and minerals help keep you in good health while reducing your risk of issues such as osteoporosis and anemia.



# YOUR MACROS

## MIND YOUR MACROS

Make sure your intake of carbs, fats, and protein aligns with your goals.

The Institute of Medicine of the National Academies recommends:

- 45% to 65% of calories from carbohydrates
- 10% to 35% of calories from protein
- 20% to 35% of calories from fat

## WHY IT MATTERS:

→ Protein helps your body build and repair, and it keeps you feeling full.

→ "Clean" carb-rich foods contain valuable micronutrients for long-term health.

→ Healthy fats are good for your heart, skin, and more!



# WHAT DOES IT REALLY MEAN?

Did you know the labels on your foods have specific criteria and definitions?

**Here's how to know the facts behind your food choices ....**

## How foods earn the organic label

### PRODUCE:

Crops must be grown on soil that had no prohibited substances (i.e., synthetic fertilizers and pesticides) applied for the past 3 years.

### MEAT & DAIRY:

The animals must be raised according to their natural living conditions – like being “free range” and able to graze. They must not be given hormones or antibiotics, and they must be fed organic feed and forage.

### PACKAGED & PROCESSED FOODS:

Items must not contain artificial colors, flavors or preservatives. Ingredients must be organic, although approved non-organic items may be added, such as enzymes in yogurt or baking soda in baked goods.

## OTHER COMMON LABELS

### “CAGE-FREE” EGGS:

This simply means the chickens were raised without cages. However, they could still be living indoors in overcrowded space.

### “PASTURE RAISED”:

The animals spent some time outdoors, feeding on grass or forage.

### “GRASS FED”:

The animal’s main source of food came from grass or forage and not grains. This does not tell you if antibiotics or hormones were used on the animal or what conditions it lived in.

### NO ANTIBIOTICS:

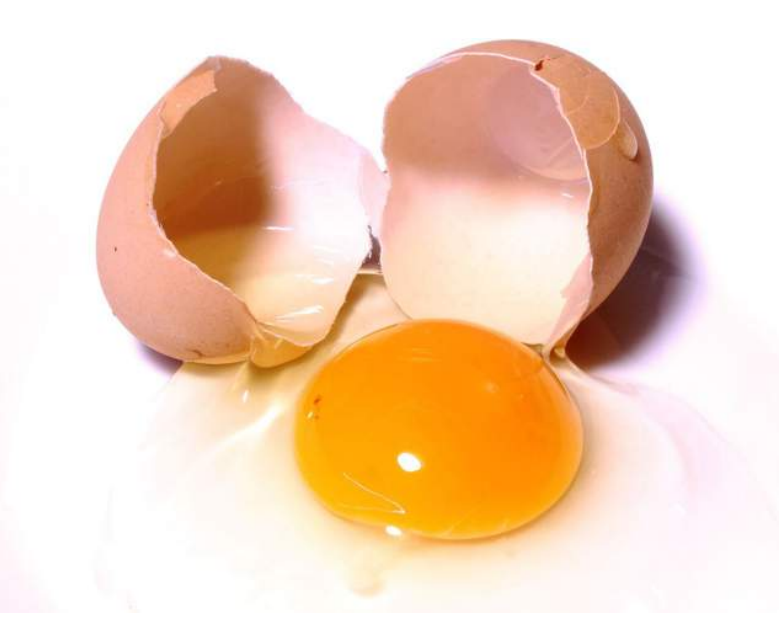
This is basically just as it says: the animal was never fed antibiotics over the course of its life. It makes no claims over living conditions, etc.

### NO HORMONES:

US law prohibits the use of hormones on hogs and poultry, so these label claims are meaningless with these foods. With other animals, it simply means they were never given hormones, but does not indicate their living conditions.

# MORE TERMS YOU SHOULD KNOW

The front label claims on food products are more than just marketing. Here's what they actually mean, according to U.S. guidelines.



**Calorie free** – Less than 5 calories per serving.

**“Excellent source of”** – Provides at least 20% of the daily value of a particular vitamin or nutrient per serving.

**Fat-free/sugar-free** – Less than ½ gram of fat or sugar per serving.

**“Good source of”** – Provides at least 10% to 19% of the Daily Value of a particular vitamin or nutrient per serving.

**“High in”** – Provides 20% or more of the Daily Value of a specified nutrient per serving.

**Low calorie** – 40 calories or less per serving.

**Low cholesterol** – 20 milligrams or less and 2 grams or less of saturated fat per serving.

**Low sodium** – 140 milligrams or less of sodium per serving.

**“Reduced”** – Product contains 25% less in the specified nutrient than the amount in the “regular” version of the product.

# WHOLESOME, NUTRITIOUS CHOICES MADE EASIER

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We hope this helps you to demystify the food label and that the "10-second label scan" is a tool you can use every time you're at the store!

Remember ... when in doubt, choose foods with only a few ingredients, and make sure you know and can pronounce each item!

It's all about paying attention, and being AWARE of what we're putting into our bodies.

Making educated decisions is the KEY to your success!





# **UPGRADED FOOD CHOICES FOR AN ENERGIZED LIFE**