Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading a Nutrition Label

Circle group

Every packaged food in a grocery store has a nutrition facts label. Learning to read it can help you make smart choices. First, check the serving size. All the numbers on the label are for one serving, not the whole package. A bag of chips might hold three servings. If you eat the whole bag, you triple every number on it.

Next are the calories. Calories measure the energy that food gives. Your body needs energy to grow, think, and play, so calories are not bad. The question is whether the food also gives you useful nutrients. The label lists fat, sodium, carbohydrates, protein, fiber, and sugars. It also lists some vitamins and minerals. Fiber and protein are good things to look for. Most people should limit added sugars and sodium. Sodium is the part of salt that matters most for health.

The label also shows the percent daily value, or percent DV. It compares one serving to the amount a person is told to eat in a whole day. It is based on a diet of 2,000 calories. Here is a quick guide. Five percent or less is low. Twenty percent or more is high. So if you want less sodium, look for foods with a low percent DV.

Last, check the ingredients list. It names everything in the food, from most to least by weight. If sugar is near the top, the food has a lot of it. Reading labels takes only a few seconds. It turns guessing into knowing.

Questions

1. What do the numbers on a nutrition label cover?

_____

_____

2. What does the percent daily value compare?

_____

_____

3. In what order are the ingredients listed?

_____

_____

4. A bag holds three servings. What happens to the numbers if you eat the whole bag?

_____

_____

5. What does it mean if sugar is near the top of the ingredients list?

_____

_____

Words to know

serving: the amount of food that the label treats as one portion
nutrients: substances in food that the body needs to live and grow
sodium: the part of salt that people should not eat too much of
fiber: a part of plant foods that helps digestion
ingredients: the foods and other things a product is made from

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading a Nutrition Label

Triangle group

Every packaged food in a grocery store carries a nutrition facts label, and learning to read it can help you make smart choices. The most important line to check first is the serving size. All the numbers on the label describe one serving, not the whole package. A bag of chips might contain three servings, so eating the entire bag means tripling every number printed on it.

Next comes the calories, which measure the energy a food provides. Your body needs energy to grow, think, and play, so calories are not bad. The question is whether the food gives you useful nutrients along with the energy. The label lists fat, sodium, carbohydrates, protein, fiber, and sugars, as well as several vitamins and minerals. Fiber and protein are usually good things to look for. Added sugars and sodium, which is the part of salt that matters most for health, are things that most people should limit.

The label also shows the percent daily value, written as percent DV. This compares a serving to the amount a person is advised to eat in a whole day, based on a diet of 2,000 calories. As a quick guide, 5 percent or less is considered low for a nutrient, and 20 percent or more is considered high. So if you want less sodium, look for foods with a low percent DV.

Finally, check the ingredients list, which names everything in the food from most to least by weight. If sugar appears near the top, the food contains a lot of it. Reading labels takes only a few seconds, and it turns guessing into knowing.

Questions

1. What do the numbers on a nutrition label describe?

_____

_____

2. What does the percent daily value compare?

_____

_____

3. In what order does the ingredients list name things?

_____

_____

4. A bag holds three servings. What happens to the numbers if you eat the whole bag?

_____

_____

5. What does it tell you if sugar is near the top of the ingredients list?

_____

_____

Words to know

serving: the amount of food that the label treats as one portion
nutrients: substances in food that the body needs to live and grow
sodium: the part of salt that people should not eat too much of
fiber: a part of plant foods that helps digestion
ingredients: the foods and other things a product is made from

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

Name: _____ Date: _____

Reading a Nutrition Label

Square group

Every packaged food in a grocery store carries a nutrition facts label, and learning to interpret it can help you make sensible choices. The most important line to examine first is the serving size, because all of the numbers on the label describe a single serving rather than the entire package. A bag of chips might contain three servings, so consuming the whole bag means tripling every figure printed on it.

Next come the calories, which measure the energy that a food provides. Your body requires energy to grow, think, and play, so calories are not inherently bad. The real question is whether the food supplies useful nutrients along with that energy. The label itemizes fat, sodium, carbohydrates, protein, fiber, and sugars, in addition to several vitamins and minerals. Fiber and protein are generally worth seeking out, whereas added sugars and sodium, which is the component of salt that matters most for health, are things that most people should limit.

The label also displays the percent daily value, written as percent DV. This compares a serving with the amount that a person is advised to consume over an entire day, based on a diet of 2,000 calories. As a quick guideline, 5 percent or less is considered low for a nutrient, while 20 percent or more is considered high. Consequently, if you hope to reduce your sodium, you should look for foods with a low percent DV.

Finally, scan the ingredients list, which names everything in the food in descending order by weight. If sugar appears near the top, the food contains a great deal of it. Reading labels takes only a few seconds, and it transforms guessing into knowing.

Questions

1. What do the numbers on a nutrition label describe?

_____

_____

2. What does the percent daily value compare?

_____

_____

3. How does the ingredients list order the items it names?

_____

_____

4. If a bag holds three servings, what happens to the figures when someone consumes the whole bag?

_____

_____

5. What can you conclude when sugar appears near the top of the ingredients list?

_____

_____

Words to know

serving: the amount of food that the label treats as one portion
nutrients: substances in food that the body needs to live and grow
sodium: the part of salt that people should not eat too much of
fiber: a part of plant foods that helps digestion
ingredients: the foods and other things a product is made from

Talk together (every group has these)

1. Find one fact that every group read. How did your sheet say it?
2. What did your sheet tell you that you think another group's did not? Ask them.
3. What is one question about this topic that none of the sheets answered?

For the teacher: Reading a Nutrition Label

Each student sheet carries a shape, not a level. The same topic and facts, written three ways.

Circle: Reading a Nutrition Label

Easier · 251 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 4.5

1. One serving, not the whole package.
2. One serving to the amount a person is told to eat in a whole day.
3. From most to least by weight.
4. They are tripled, because each number is for one serving.
5. The food has a lot of sugar.

Triangle: Reading a Nutrition Label

This passage · 267 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 7.6

1. One serving, not the whole package.
2. A serving to the amount a person is advised to eat in a whole day.
3. From most to least by weight.
4. They are tripled, because each number describes only one serving.
5. The food contains a lot of sugar.

Square: Reading a Nutrition Label

Harder · 277 words · Flesch-Kincaid grade 10.1

1. A single serving rather than the entire package.
2. A serving with the amount a person is advised to consume over an entire day.
3. In descending order by weight, from most to least.
4. Every figure is tripled, because the label describes only one serving.
5. That the food contains a great deal of sugar.