

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information,

contact: Tyler Johnson

Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program Agent, Wildcat Extension District

[tajohnson120@ksu.edu](mailto:tajohnson120@ksu.edu), 620-232-1930

*Photo(s) Enclosed To Print Media*

## How to Read the Nutrition Facts Label

Pretend you standing in front of a dozen different types of pasta sauce. They all look good, but you need to know what is best for your family. Have you ever had this happen? I know I have. The nutrition facts label is the perfect place to help you make the right decision. Here is how you can use the nutrition facts label to help you decide.

### Label Basics

Watch for these terms to help you know what the label is telling you.

- **Serving Size** – Serving size tells you how to understand the rest of the information on the label. The example on the right shows a serving size of ¼ cup. Each ¼ cup has the nutrition listed (ex. 100 calories). Serving Size is important to understand because most people have larger servings than what is listed, but they still think what they eat is a serving. If this is the case, you need to adjust the rest of the label based on how much you eat. For example, if you ate ½ cup, or two servings, you would double everything on the label (ex. 200 calories).
- **Servings Per Container** – Servings per container tells you how many servings are in the package. This can help you figure out how many people or how many meals you can get out of the package. Another way this information is useful is for portion control. Look at the example, you will see it has 8 servings per container. The information listed on the nutrition label is per serving or portion. If you use the whole container, you can make 8 meals with the nutrition listed.
- **Calories** - Calories are important to keep us moving. If we eat more calories than we use, we will gain weight. The number of calories people need depends on your height, weight, gender, activity level, etc... Most nutrition labels are based on a 2,000-calorie healthy adult diet (see the note on the bottom of the label). By watching the number of calories you eat, you will know how many calories you have left for the day.

Nutrition Facts	
Serving Size 1/4 Cup (113g)	
Servings Per Container 8	
Amount Per Serving	
<b>Calories</b> 100	Calories from Fat 20
% Daily Value*	
<b>Total Fat</b> 2g	<b>3%</b>
Saturated Fat 1.5g	<b>7%</b>
Trans Fat 0g	
<b>Cholesterol</b> 10mg	<b>3%</b>
<b>Sodium</b> 460mg	<b>19%</b>
<b>Total Carbohydrate</b> 4g	<b>1%</b>
Dietary Fiber 0g	<b>0%</b>
Sugars 4g	
<b>Protein</b> 16g	
Vitamin A 0%	Vitamin C 0%
Calcium 8%	Iron 0%
* Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet.	

Source: [FDA Nutrition Facts Label](#)

- **% Daily Value** – The Percent Daily Value (% Daily Value or % DV) on the nutrition facts label lets you know how much of a certain nutrient your body needs is in a serving. For example, on the nutrition label it says 19% Daily Value of Sodium. This means one serving has 19% of the sodium you should be eating daily. Like the other nutrition information, the % DV increases based on the number of servings you eat. For example, if you were to eat ½ cup, you would be eating 2 servings or 38% of your Daily Value of Sodium.
- **Sodium** – Sodium is a naturally occurring element needed for daily life. Too much sodium causes health issues. It is important to keep a close eye on the sodium in your food. Try to keep from purchasing foods with sodium added. There are some tricks to reading the label that can help. Canned goods labeled “low sodium” contain less than 140 mg of sodium, “very low sodium” contains less than 35 mg, and “sodium-free” contains less than 5 mg. Be wary of “reduced sodium” on a label. This means it has less sodium than the original version of the same brand label. There is no standard amount of sodium with “reduced sodium.” This means some “reduced sodium” cans could have higher amounts of sodium than the regular version of other brands.
- **Sugars** – Like sodium, sugar is naturally occurring. When people think of sugar, they usually think of table sugar, white and crystal-like. Table sugar is just one form of sugar. Sugar comes in a number of forms. Fruit, honey, and milk all have naturally occurring sugars. Recently there was a lot of attention given to high-fructose corn syrup (HFCS). HFCS is a chemical process to make concentrated sugar. HFCS is found in a number of commercially made sauces, dressings, and even canned foods. It is most commonly found in soda. Like sodium, try to keep from purchasing foods with sugar added and try to avoid products with HFCS in them.
- **Trans Fat** – Trans fats are a form of unsaturated fat. Trans fats raise LDL or the “bad cholesterol” and are linked to a number of health issues. Although most trans fats are created during commercial food processing, some can be found naturally in meat and dairy. To try and avoid trans fats, look for them on the nutrition label. Also, try to avoid products that have been through a process called hydrogenation

Please contact me to schedule an appointment or for more information, contact Tyler Johnson, [tajohnson120@ksu.edu](mailto:tajohnson120@ksu.edu), or by calling 620-232-1930.

###

*K - State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer*